

THE
CORRESPONDENTS,

AN
ORIGINAL NOVEL,
IN
A SERIES OF LETTERS.

A NEW EDITION.

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THE
CORRESPONDENTS.

To *.

I know too well the melancholy reason of your present silence, and do not presume to interrupt it, or desire you to write till perfectly convenient; but the consideration of this day's beginning a *New Year*, induces me to send you my best wishes (not my compliments) on that occasion.

I am just returning from church, and there, with the most ardent sincerity,

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I petitioned that your valuable life might be prolonged beyond the common date of humanity; that your sensibility might never more be wounded by the loss of a friend; that you might enjoy uninterrupted health and every species of happiness.

To **.

I have no suitable return for your most kind wish. The second article includes every thing; and is the best condolence I have received; for on these occasions little to the purpose can be said.

As to the rest, when I enjoy health I am thankful; but there are not many species of happiness that I *can* enjoy. People in advanced life, as their connections dissolve, grow indifferent, and find their attachment to the world decrease

daily: the few pleasures they can relish, may generally be safely afforded them. Your correspondence is numbered among the few that I regard: you will continue it to me, and accept my sincere acknowledgments.

To *.

It is not probable that I shall ever decline a correspondence that does me so much honour; especially whilst I continue to observe your indulgent command, of writing „the very first thoughts that occur when I take up a pen.“

I have been amusing myself these two hours with a piece of embroidery. This easy occupation engages the fingers without confining the thoughts; so, after a variety of ideas had ran through

my mind, I began on a sudden to review my past life.

I contemplated the chequered scene with strict attention; and concluded at length, that the white hours were infinitely more than the dark in number; and that, far from repining, I had abundant cause of thankfulness to that good Providence whose bounty had exceeded my desert. Casting my eyes round, finding myself in a very comfortable retreat—independent of the world—enjoying *tolerable* health — a few friends still spared to me — O *Memory*, thought I, what but *thy* annihilation is wanting to my happiness! then I could enjoy these various blessings without the reflection [of their uncertainty, without the dread of their sudden loss. — Here I broke off my meditation, and endeavoured to confirm my tranquillity, by communicating this account of it, which

I know will afford a generous satisfaction to your benign heart; a satisfaction that may increase, by your recollecting to *whose* advice and assistance I am principally indebted for that independence which is my chief boast.

You have forbidden acknowledgments; yet allow me this once to speak my grateful remembrance of the obligation, and subscribe myself, with the utmost respect

Your most devoted, etc.

To * *.

The substance of your letter is a very agreeable lesson in moral philosophy; but I wish you had omitted the conclusion. How often must I repeat that you owe me no obligation? The act of rendering you a small service was its own reward; and the endeavouring to improve our

acquaintance into friendship was to please myself. Why then do we not converse upon equal terms? Why any respect? the *utmost respect*, my *most devoted*? How am I to account for the use of these terms? Can the trifling and accidental difference of our *rank* make any impression on your mind? — Impossible! — Your soul is undoubtedly superior to that weakness.

To *.

I should be very sorry if you ascribed the marks of my *respectful* esteem to a wrong motive; and think my soul is superior to the weakness you mention.

I may seem, occasionally humble; a profound veneration *does* sometimes make an impression on my mind; but it is *character*, not *rank*, which excites that hu-

mility and veneration. — You may remember conducting me much nearer the meridian splendor of *title*; but you do not remember that I was dazzled by its rays. — The *highest* rank, if unaccompanied by that extensive genius, those exalted talents, that long and improved acquaintance with the world, that perfect and universal knowledge of men and things, which unite to form the character of a certain person, could never exact from me that respect which I cherish for *him*; and which is not lessened by his acquittal of my numerous obligations.

To * *.

If you have not justified yourself at the expence of your sincerity, it is all very well; but

„O beware, beware of *Flattery*!

„It is a monster, that like Jealousy,

„Doth make the meat it feeds on.“ —

Long life, as the gift of providence, is valuable, if employed to advantage; but an acquaintance with the world, a knowledge of mankind, can very seldom procure either respect or happiness. He „that increaseth knowledge, increaseth „sorrow.“ Again, says *the Preacher*, „I „considered all travel and every right work, „that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. Of making many books there is „no end; and much study is weariness.“ I cannot think of these things, nor of the various experiments which I, like *him*, have unsuccessfully made to obtain happiness, without drawing the same pensive conclusion, that *all is vanity*.

You suppose me well acquainted with the world. I have seen something of it;

enough to be almost tired, since novelty has lost its charms. New fashions, new customs, new opinions, are daily starting up. I cannot adopt them with the facility of youth. I weigh, ponder, examine, perhaps reject, them. The world, that world I am so perfectly acquainted with — derides me as an obstinate old fellow, for declining its present mode; but pays no kind of regard to my useless experience. Every age thinks itself wiser than the former; the improvements of every age confirm this idea. Take care you become not [so unfashionable, as to regard any thing but the accomplishments, the wit, the elegance, the genius, of the present hour!

To *.

Your last letter had very nearly put a period to our correspondence. „*All is vanity!*“ You are almost tired of the world! I neither doubt it, nor wonder, because there are so few things, and so few people in it, that can possibly amuse or engage a mind like your's. What presumption in *me* to attempt either! — It is with reluctance I send this. Could I but know the time, the place, the circumstances, the disposition, in which you received my notes — but to intrude and break in upon your more important thoughts with such frivolous insignificance! — Perhaps the very instant of reading this was devoted to a better employment. Why do I say *perhaps*? there is no doubt of it. Pardon therefore the in-

terruption; and resume (before it is wholly broken) the thread of your contemplation.

To * *.

I was in a very ill humour, had company with me, and had just done dinner, when your letter was brought. Ten times more frivolous than that was the conversation it interrupted; so I read it over again and again, till at length it produced a change in my temper. Your amiable and generous solicitude to please *me*, inspired *me* with an inclination to please *my guests*. In proportion as my endeavours succeeded, my cheerfulness increased; every body seemed to improve; and the evening went off with tolerable satisfaction.

So, for this time, because of the good effect they had on me, I pardon your diffidence, your doubts, scruples, and apologies; but repeat them not, I conjure you. Believe, that all times, in all places and circumstances, your letters will be acceptable. Herewith I return you a packet, (October and December inclusive) and, to satisfy you still farther, will in future delay opening them till the proper moment of leisure.

Adieu! if you now persist in apologies, you are not the person I take you for.

To *.

You are not displeased with me? I am and will be the person you take me for: but indeed you could not have chosen a worse time for the restoration of my letters. I have been reading them over as I burnt them, and am put entirely out of conceit with myself. Such low, trifling, ridiculous stuff; and above all, such a seeming imitation of your style and manner — Yet I protest it is not an imitation. — Don't laugh at my vanity. — I mean only *that* style (very different from other writing) in which you honour me with a familiar correspondence.

I remember you were angry at such an observation once before; but I cannot help being still of opinion, that this mode of expression, particularly the short

and interrogatory sentences, however suitable to you, do very ill become your correspondent.

To * *.

When I first proposed this friendly correspondence, you pleaded inability to maintain it; upon which, I promised never to write or require long or correct letters. A few artless lines, expressive of health, of friendship, of *any thing* but study and affectation, was all that I requested from you, or gave you to expect from me.

I established at the same time a very unexceptionable *conveyance*; and promised to return your letters: in short, according to my notion of things, I removed

every objection that diffidence, discretion, or delicacy could suggest.

Your letter intimates the contrary. You are now dissatisfied because there appears a similarity in our style. — Have I not already told you, that when two persons of similar — but I hate repetitions — your next letter will decide the point. If you chuse to discontinue the correspondence, I shall readily acquiesce: but pray do not give yourself the trouble of writing any more excuses.

To *.

May I venture to write at all? for now you are indeed seriously angry, and with reason. Forgive me this once, and I will endeavour to merit your forgiveness.

We have had several new plays this winter; — but I suppose you have read

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them all. — *Two* I know are published, *Zingis and Cyrus*, which last I saw a few nights ago, and was extremely well entertained.

You must allow me to confine my criticism entirely to the *performance*, which I thought remarkably happy. — Mrs. Yates was amazingly great; the part is quite in her cast: she was charmingly dressed, preserved the idea of royalty through every scene, and in every different attitude looked a *Mandane*. Mr. *Powell* too pleased me exceedingly: his person was greatly favoured in a singular and very becoming dress; and I thought I discovered several new beauties in his action. He drew tears from me without speaking a word, in that scene where his mother urges him to acknowledge himself her son; and he with infinite emotion declines the explanation.

These tears were all I shed. I am seldom much affected by pompous declamation, or high-wrought passion; and the poet had well nigh forfeited my pity for *Mandane*, by painting her so savage in her revenge.

I was pleased with two circumstances in the exhibition of this piece, which I never remember to have seen before; one was, the stage being wholly covered with green cloth, which appeared quite proper, as the scene lies without doors; and prevented the absurdity of bringing carpets to fall upon: — the other was, seeing Mrs. Yates, in a supposed agony of terror, fall motionless to the ground without assistance. — The audience in general applauded this manoeuvre; and seemed sensible how much better an effect it had, than her being caught by

attendants, whose unmeaning faces would probably have spoiled the scene.

Enough at this time for the patience of my noble reader, who will now, I hope, sign a free pardon for his reformed and penitent correspondent.

To * *.

Your pardon is undoubtedly signed, sealed, and delivered; — but I cannot greatly admire the epithet you bestow on me, and must beg leave to disclaim it. It is not your noble reader, but your friend, your good friend, who returns thanks for your letter; and was very well pleased with your criticism — Come then, let us hear a little more of the matter. Let us know what you *are* affected by in dramatic representation, if not by declamation or passion: also what

species of theatrical entertainment you prefer to the rest. Here is a large field, from which I expect a copious harvest. Adieu!

Your's very sincerely.

To *.

The field may be large, and the harvest great; yet the labourer may not have strength to reap it. But this is not an apology: for I enter very cheerfully upon my task.

My theatrical taste, then, (without further preface) has undergone several revolutions. When I was about half my present age, I admired nothing but pantomime, and the agile tricks of Harlequin, though, at the same time, prompted by childish vanity, I affected to de-

spise them. Soon after that period, my taste really altered. *Romeo* and *Alexander* became my heroes. I was pleased with alternate fighting and storming; and the most extravagant scenes of the most extravagant tragedies appeared to me the noblest and most delightful. Weaned from this folly, I took a strong fancy to *musical* pieces, on account of performing them on my own instruments; then ascending, as I thought, a full scale in the climax of refinement, nothing would please me but the *Italian* opera: this, however, was a short-liv'd passion; and was succeeded by a fondness of the historical drama, and those plays that are usually classed under the title of *genteel comedy*; and these, with a few exceptions, continue my favourite entertainments. Regarding the theatres as the mirror of human life, I prefer such pie-

ces as reflect in my notions the most agreeable representations of it; from hence arises my admiration of Shakespeare. I have no time to consider how he strains probability in his *events*, my attention is wholly engaged by the innumerable strokes of truth and nature in his *characters*. How amiable, how interesting are some of these! I am not going to write a panegyric on this immortal bard, but I shall for ever love and honour his memory, because he is the only poet (that I know of) who has delineated to perfection the character of a *female friend*. Now, if to this some *manly* critic should *wittily* object, that Shakespeare created many *imaginary beings*, I will readily allow *that*, because it does not affect this character. We *wonder* at the fairies, at the witches, at Ariel, at Caliban, but do we wonder at *Celia*? No, she is generally

passed over with inattention, which alone is sufficient to prove that the character is not uncommon, at least not *unnatural*; but it often proves more, it proves a slowness in discovering the beauties of this matchless writer.

Pray, pray, now good lords of the creation, let us do justice to my favourite heroine: while David and Jonathan, Pylades and Orestes, Damon and Pythias, are so triumphantly held up on your side, let us at least erect one standard of friendship on our own, and inscribe it with the names of Celia and Rosalind.

Consider then, in the first place, the *situation* of these two friends.

„Rosalind, the old Duke's daughter, is not banished with her father. . . for . . . the new Duke's daughter, her cousin, so loves her, (being from their cradles bred up together) that she would ha-

we followed her in exile, or have died to stay behind her."

Observe too, that *Rosalind* carried the palm of beauty; she was „tall and fair," her cousin, „low and browner." „Thou art a fool;" says the Duke to Celia, „she robs thee of thy name; and thou wilt shew more bright, and seem more virtuous when she is gone."

And now let us recollect the conduct and sentiments of this magnanimous girl.

Cel. I pray thee, *Rosalind*, sweet my coz, be merry.

Ros. Dear Celia, I shew more mirth than I am mistress of; and would you I were yet merrier? Unless you can teach me how to forget a banished father, you must not expect me to remember any extraordinary pleasure.

Cel. Herein I see thou lov'st me not with the full weight that I love thee. If my uncle, thy banished father, had banished my father,

so thou hadst been still with me, I could have taught my love to take thy father for mine.

Ros. Well, I will forget the condition of my own estate to rejoice in your's.

Cel. You know my father hath no child but I, nor none is like to have: and truly, when he dies, thou shalt be his heir; for what he hath taken away from thy father per force, I will render thee again in affection; by mine honour, I will;— and when I break that oath let me turn monster: therefore, my sweet Rose, my dear Rose, be merry.

I pass over her generous intercession with the Duke, when his anger breaks out against Rosalind, and shall trouble you only with what immediately follows the sentence of her banishment.

Cel. O, my poor Rosalind! where wilt thou go?

I charge thee, be not thou more griev'd than I am,

Ros. I have more cause.

Cel. Thou hast not, Cousin;
Pr'ythee be cheerful; know'st thou not the Duke
Hath banish'd *me*, his daughter?

Ros. That he hath not.

Cel. No! hath not? Rosalind lacks then
the love
Which teacheth *me* that thou and I are one.
Shall we be sunder'd? shall we part, sweet
girl?

No; — let my father seek another heir.
Therefore, devise with me how we may fly,
Whither to go, and what to bear with us;
And do not seek to take your change upon
you,
To bear your griefs yourself and leave me out:
For *by this heaven*, now at our sorrows pale,
Say what thou canst, I'll go along with thee.

The heroic generosity of this resolution,
and the fortitude, constancy, and cheer-
fulness that attended the execution of it,
made a very early impression on my
mind; and from the time I remember

any thing, I remember a particular esteem for the character of Celia. You will pardon, therefore, my prolixity in speaking of it, and will allow too, I fancy, that the play in general abounds with moral, poetical, dramatic, and sentimental beauties.

I have now had the honour to acquaint you at large with my theatrical opinions; for you gather from what I have said concerning this comedy, that I prefer the flow of conversation to the pomp of declamation; and am more interested, more affected, and consequently better pleased by one Shakespearian touch of nature and sentiment, than by all the most florid and impassioned speeches of other tragedians.

I have *laughed* at the sorrows of *Theodosius* and the ravings of *Roxana*: — 1

have *wept* at the generosity of old *Adam*,
and the tenderness of *Miranda*.

How beautiful her address to *Ferdinand*!

— — Alas now, pray you
Work not so hard; — Sit down and rest
yourself.

— — If you'll sit down,
I'll bear your logs the while. — Pray give
me that,
I'll carry it to the pile.

I shall not apologize for the length of
this scribble, neither am I fearful of
your *thinking* it too long. Your *corrective*
letter opened my eyes and my heart.
I see that I have nothing to apprehend.
I see plainly that the happiness of your
friendship awaits me; and I accept it with
the utmost gratitude. My *friend*, my
good friend, I bid you most respectfully
adieu.

To **.

I cannot express the satisfaction your letter gave me. I have been reading it ever since; and rejoice to discover in you that elegant *simplicity* of taste which is my chief admiration. Your heart was rather tedious in expanding; but you say it is open, and you *accept* my friendship. Cherish, cultivate that friendship, and give me your's in return. Be assured that I shall prize it highly. — I will compare it to a benignant star. My sun of happiness is set; and the shades of night cannot be very far distant; but your friendship, like a star glimmering in the twilight, shall illumine and cheer my pensive walk through the evening of life.

Adieu. I am coming to town. Do not write till you hear from me. I hope

we shall meet oftener than we did last year. You do not live wholly at ***? I want to see your place there. Perhaps I may not wait for an invitation. Adieu.

P. S. Is your *standard* firm? or have you recollected you were opposing fiction to truth? A word to the wife. — I shall not press the argument. Adieu.

To the same.

I owe you a thousand apologies for yesterday's intrusion, Your *surprise* disconcerted me so much, that I do not remember what excuses I made. It was certainly very ridiculous . . . but finding you were at home and alone, hearing too (as I went up stairs) the sound of a harpsichord, and your voice accompany-

ing, I knew you must be at leisure, and entered in that abrupt manner, for which I immediately blamed myself, and again ask your pardon.

Accept my thanks too for a more obliging reception than was due to so rude a guest. I am charmed with your little villa, its decorations, furniture, and its mistress. The thoughts of them all together spoiled my dinner, and made me repent having declined your *halfinvitation*. My curiosity is not satisfied; I don't know what garden you have: did I see the extent of it from the dressing-room window? Interrupted. Adieu. Pray give me a line *per return*.

To *.

It was quite unnecessary to take the trouble of *apologizing* for your sudden visit. I don't know but in some respects it was better than otherwise, because I shall not in future expect — You understand and pardon this freedom, ascribing all to the right motive. Pardon too my not enlarging on the subject, for the polite Mrs. ***** (who gives me the honour of taking the air with her this morning) is waiting whilst I write this. Adieu.

To * *.

Where are you, my goop friend, and what are you about? I have been these three days in hourly expectation of a letter. Your last was only an apology for one: so cool, so concise; but I „ascribed

it to the right motive," and thought you would write again. Let me beg that you *will* do so immediately. I hope my *visit* was not *any way* disagreeable or unserviceable to the cause I wished to promote.

To *.

I delay not one moment to assure you, with the utmost sincerity, that the honour of your visit was in the highest degree welcome and agreeable; nor was it at all unserviceable to the cause which, I *flatter* myself, you designed it to promote. I only delayed writing till I should hear again from you, hoping you would give me a new subject, and spare me the necessity of re-entreating your pardon for declining I know not how to express myself for declining the favour of your particular notice. — You acknowledged on Monday,

that my objections to a personal intercourse were not ill-founded ; but I need not embarrass myself with arguments. I know you will have the goodness to acquiesce, and *in silence* too. We *shall* sometimes see each other *by accident*. „C'est assez.“
Adieu. I subscribe myself, with pride and pleasure,

Your FRIEND.

To **.

„I thank you, I am not of many words, but I thank you *)“ and hope you will approve my laconic acknowledgment. I am happy that you have at length *subscribed* yourself my Friend, because I believe your veracity unquestionable, and have long been coveting your friendship. Nor will you be a loser by the bargain: for this

*) Shakespeare.

bribe will induce me to *acquiesce* with your present determination, „and in *silence* too.“ Ah, my dear Mrs. * *, you know very well who has the worst end of the argument.

I am just at this instant in tolerable good humour with all the world; and having excluded the cares of it for one half hour, may possibly contradict the assertion I began with, and prove myself „of many words:“ but these little contradictions are always forgiven in a letter. They abound particularly in loveletters, where an enamoured swain frequently laughs and cries, burns and freezes, lives and dies, in the same breath, while the tender nymph, in *her* epistles, hopes and fears, doubts and believes, rejects and accepts, with equal facility and consistence.

Let me tell you just now, before it escapes my memory, that I was mightily

pleased this morning by a very trivial circumstance. It was in turning over a volume of Stern's Sentimental Journey, (you have read it no doubt) where I was struck by the following passage:

— „I was certain she was of a better order of beings—a guarded frankness with which she gave me her hand, shewed, I thought, her good education and her good sense; and as I led her on, I felt a pleasurable ductility about her, which spread a calmness over all my spirits.—

„I had not yet seen her face — 'twas not material — but when we got to the door she withdrew her hand from across her forehead — it was a face of about six-and-twenty (*not quite so much*) of a clear transparent brown, simply set off without rouge or powder—it was not *critically* handsome, but there was that in it which attached me much more to it—

it was interesting; I fancied it wore the characters of a widowed look, etc. etc. etc. — but you did not know *Sterne*, you did not therefore fit to him for this picture.

„Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatia.“ He was indeed “a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy.” Pity that his genius was so tainted, so impure, the more pity, because his works *will* be read. He strews pearls in a ditch, and *oblige* his readers to dive for them. The single story of *Le Fevre*, if skilfully detached from the life of *Shandy*, would do immortal honour to his memory; but it is too firmly incorporated; and, like the embroidery on *Martins coat*, must adhere to the main stuff, or be torn to rags *).

Adieu. I have other letters to write. Let me hear from you to-morrow;

*) Tale of a Tub.

and pray give me *your* opinion of this writer, with a list of those chapters which you prefer to the rest in his Journey.

To *.

I write this afternoon because you deferred me, though I am in a very unfuitable disposition, being extremely peevish, tired, and fatigued, by the persecution of a visit four hours long from Mr. —. I believe you have heard of him. I had received your letter, and was sitting down to answer it the very moment that he came in. I was under the necessity of asking him to dine—but such a dinner! „O gentle Jupiter, with what tedious homilies did he weary my spirits.“ — For you must know this coxcomb is not one of that brisk lively species, who engross *all* the conversation, (I can bear them well

enough) but a grave, solemn one, who pauses—and takes snuff—and asks impertinent questions—and divides and subdivides the ridiculous nothingness of his discourse—and forgets the beginning of his story, and wonders you cannot remember it—then pauses—hesitates—recollects, and begins again, the important narrative of some family-connexion in the last century or the true and surprising history of his travels through London and Westminster.

He is but just gone, as I hope you will imagine, by my fretfulness not having subsided; but indeed I had cause to be angry, for he banished a train of very agreeable ideas, which are now irrecoverably lost.

I will therefore trouble you with no farther addition at present than my thanks for your remarks on Sterne, and

the complimentary allusion, deferring till my next, the catalogue of beauties in his Sentimental Journey.

To * *.

I have heard of your coxcomb visitor, and see him very plainly in your description; but you need not have told me you were angry, for I could *read* that in the spirit and volubility of your expression. Nothing more voluble than a lady's anger'— Enough of this, I have something else to communicate. You must go to the play to-morrow. *Garrick performs*. Mrs. *** has places, and will send to you in the morning. ** is of the party. I shall drop in by accident. Do not refuse. You can have no objection; and I hope have no pre-engagement.

To the same.

I was astonished this morning at hearing that you went away so early. I thought at least you would have staid dinner, and wanted to make excuses for my *desertion* last night. Shall I say it was on your account? a bad *compliment* indeed, but I really fancied you seemed under restraint. You were so very silent, and the rest so very talkative, that in short I grew tired; and after pleading engagement, could not decently return.

Let me hope for a line to-morrow. Were you well entertained? I thought Garrick as great as ever. Adieu.

To *.

Yes, my Lord, I was extremely well entertained: but (pardon me for retur-

ning your *compliment*) was much happier after your departure; not merely on account of restraint, but had you not withdrawn, I had lost one of the highest pleasures a sensible mind can enjoy, which is, hearing the praises of those it values. Some company that sat near us, I don't know who they were, but the moment you left the box they began to speak of you . . . and . . . No . . . not one word shall I repeat. I remember your caution, and will ever „beware of flattery.“ Sufficient for me that I *heard* these praises: they were honest and judicious, doing infinite credit to those who bestowed them, and giving exquisite pleasure to your Friend.

To * *.

I thank you very sincerely for the generous interest you took in those people's dis-

course, and for the communication of it: not that either reflects so much honour upon me as upon your own heart; but I regard the first as a proof of friendship, and the latter as a mark of confidence; and again thank you heartily for both.

There was a little error in the beginning of your letter—but excusable, considering how late we conversed—I called at * yesterday, and heard that you intended them a visit on Monday. They expect you to stay all the week. I shall have the pleasure of seeing you perhaps once more, but not so often as I could wish. Adieu.

To *.

Not having an opportunity (tho' I wished and sought for it) of speaking to you alone at Mr. *s, I am obliged to this method of acquainting you with a circum-

stance on which I shall presume to claim your friendly advice.

It was not (as you know) till very lately that I could *properly* estimate my own possessions of this world's goods. Small are these possessions, 'tis true; yet considerable enough to occasion dispute, for which, and other reasons, I am making my *will*. It has employed me some time, for I cannot please myself in the dispositions. I wish to leave more to charitable uses than *some people* would approve, whilst *others* would perhaps be as well pleased with a ring as a legacy: now these last ought in justice to have the preference: and yet (but herein I discover great weakness), I am hurt by the idea of leaving *any one* dissatisfied with my memory. I would also—but I shall enclose papers, in which my reason for every thing will appear. Pray read them at

your leisure, and favour me with your free opinion, which shall be decisive.

I fear you will think there is too much of *trifling circumstance*. Be pleased to make some allowance for *sex*, and then censure unsparingly whatever appears like vanity, singularity, or affectation.

I do not apologize for troubling you on this particular occasion; because there is not a *disinterested* person on earth that I can consult, excepting your . . . self.

To * *.

At the first glance of your request, recollecting your age and appearance, I was surpris'd, and should have thought a marriage-settlement a more proper subject of advice; but you are perfectly right.

I shall not keep you long in suspense for my opinion, having devoted this

whole day to the perusal and consideration of your papers, and am determined to approve myself an honest lawyer. I am charmed with some of your dispositions, and hope it will be let me see just seventy-five years before they take effect. Adieu.

To *.

„What thanks sufficient, or what recompence equal, have I to render?“

You do not require any—you forbid all acknowledgments. So be it then. The draught is executed; it was copied *verbatim*; it satisfied all my doubts, and will do me hereafter more credit than I deserve.

Pray my I beg your pardon, but pray have you forgot assigning me a task (some time ago) in the *Sentimental Journey*? I am now going to execute it, by tel-

ling you what parts of it I chiefly admire —

First then, the description and character, and history, and in short, every syllable concerning Father Lorenzo. The Preface. The art of making love. The passage at page 85, beginning „I pity the man.“ The distribution of the eight sous. The character of Le Fleur. The dead Afs. The Bookseller's Shop, and walk to the Rue de Guineygaude. The Starling. The Captive. Le Patissier. The Sword. Le Dimanche. Maria. The Bourbonnois. The Supper, and the Grace.

These are all the chapters I *thoroughly* approve. There are others perhaps equally agreeable to other tastes; and some I fancy that very few can admire. I have wondered sometimes, as Mr. Sterne shone so much in the pathetic, that he never introduced the distress of a tender

mind on a recent loss by death. Perhaps he might intend it, and was prevented by death from increasing that sorrow which some tender mind might feel for *his* loss. „Alas, poor Yorick!“ What an expressive epitaph! He fairly appropriated it to himself. „There be no more such *Yoricks*.“

To * *.

I have not had a leisure moment since I saw you, or I should not so long have delayed asking your pardon for that unwelcome visit. Hear the true state of the case, and believe me when I *again* protest it was entirely accidental, and very far from my intention.

I told you where we had been, and upon what business. On passing your house, *** remarked it as a pretty box

D

which he had never observed. Returning, he pulled the string in order to take a nearer view! and declared it was in good taste. The mistress of it, said I, smiling, is a particular friend of mine. That instant, on the carriage stopping, you came to the window. There's the lady, I suppose, said ***; a fine woman, an *elegant* woman, by —! Let us alight for a moment. Without waiting my answer, he opened the door himself; I followed him; you know the rest; but as we did not trouble you with *much* of our company, I will depend on your forgiveness.

As for ***, he is enraptured with you. He asked a thousand questions; and even talked of making you another visit; but I put him off this, and you need not fear it, for he sails in a few days. I don't remember whether that was men-

tioned in our short conversation, but you observed, I dare say, how *satisfied* he is with his new dignity. I want your opinion of him. You will give it me to-morrow. Adieu.

To *.

I shall not venture to give my opinion of any person at a time when I am displeased with them. You will excuse me from that task. Your *friend* — is he your friend? — was so extraordinary civil as to make me another visit this morning. Had I been aware of this honour, I would most certainly have declined it. I am loth to tell you how much it disturbed me. More indeed than it ought . . . but his strange introduction, his unpolite behaviour — I had rather he had owned his motive to be ill-bred curi-
 osity.

ty — but “ a desire of rendering me service.” — He „did not know but I might have some commands abroad.” Ridiculous! — We were sitting in awkward silence when the *diligence* came with your letter. I rang to have it brought in; and detained the servant by a motion, as if I thought *** was going. Upon this he arose, and very impertinently offered to look at the *addresse*. I concealed it; and out of all patience at something he *then* said, told him I had the honour to wish him a good morning. He seemed surprised and displeased, but recollecting himself, made his compliments, and withdrew.

But how to account for this strange behaviour; — and now that I have given you these particulars, it appears in a still more disagreeable light, and pains me exceedingly. I suppose he thought

— I don't know what he thought — I believe you will scarcely be able to read this, it is so blotted by the tears which I cannot restrain the tears of pride, anger, and vexation.

To * *.

That fellow's impertinent visit did not give you more pain than your recital of it gave me. I am extremely concerned that any inadvertence of mine should cost you a tear. I hope he did not presume pardon me, I mean not to trouble *you* with enquiries; but of this be assured, that had your letter arrived a few hours sooner yet 'tis no matter, he has left England, and may perhaps never return. Dry your eyes, therefore, and think no more of an event which, after all, is not worth a *serious* thought. So-

me ladies would have been very well pleased with such a visit, imputing it to their *irresistible* attractions. I will allow *you* to be *displeased*; but I will not allow it a place in your memory.

You must not be offended at my assuming this high privilege of controlling your thoughts. I am authorized by the knowledge of your disposition. Strange indeed, after three years study and observation on the book of your mind, if I could not translate your ideas, in whatever language they are expressed, with tolerable precision.

An instance in point. Your *chapters* of *Sterne* were all previously marked by my pencil, as what I fancied you would prefer. To say truth, I had marked a *few more*, and think still that you would have mentioned them, but for reasons which I can as easily guess.

See what knowledge I pretend to!
Expose me, if I am *but* a pretender; for
there are too many of them in all arts
and sciences, not excepting this most difficult one of human nature.

Adieu. When and where shall I see
you?

To *.

Intending myself the honour of seeing
you very soon, I decline any particular
answer to your last.

I must again have recourse to that
friendship of which you have given so
many generous proofs; and beseech your
advice on a subject of some importance.

I intended to have decided for myself;
but have not strength of mind to
determine which of two alternatives *is*
right.

From your judgment I will make no appeal, though it should be contrary to my wishes, nor will I be partial in the evidence. Vouchsafe to hear and decide this cause *to-morrow*, if possible. I shall wait on you about noon for that purpose, and if you are abroad or engaged, shall expect to *hear* when it will be more suitable.

A certain fortunate knight (we are told in the volumes of romance) had an infallible guide or director in a mystical pyramid of adamant, on the sides of which there appeared every morning engraven, by an invisible agent, the actions he was to perform that day.

While I consult you thus frequently and have the benefit of your advice, *your friendship* is to me that pyramid, that guide, that steady and infallible director.

To * *.

I have nothing to communicate, and write only to enforce my advice, which I hope you will *strictly* follow. I am astonished, that you could hesitate a moment, for, notwithstanding the acknowledged gentleness of your temper, I am certain you prize your independence.

Were parents *or* children in the case, it would be different, but in *your* circumstances, good God, what a ridiculous proposal!

Let no persuasions affect you, hasten your *tour*. That will shew them you are and will be your own mistress. I wish you health and a pleasant journey. Adieu! May your adamantyne pyramid be an happy omen! May our friendship be as durable as permanent!

To *.

I have had a very agreeable excursion, and employ the first moments of my return in writing to my noble friend. What do I owe . . . what do I *not* owe to his counsel ! I found, after assuming a little resolution, that nothing *else* was wanting to satisfy all parties.

Here then I pitch my tent, and here I find almost every requisite of happiness. You remember these lines:

An elegant sufficiency, content,
Retirement, rural quiet, *friendship*, books,
Ease, alternate labour, useful life,
Progressive virtue, and approving heav'n.

I enjoy most of these: let me practise, let me merit the rest!

I hear that you left town on Wednesday: this letter therefore salutes you

at *. That charming, that envied retreat, where I fancy you enjoy yourself infinitely better than in London. How many reasons there are for the preference! I might perhaps regard * with a partial a prepossessed eye, for I have never yet seen a place I like half so well. I remember walking through its sacred groves with a conscious, an enthusiastic pleasure, that, had I been a favourite of the muses would certainly have burst forth into the raptures of poesy.

I shall think myself happy, (if it adds to your satisfaction) in the continuance of this intercourse by writing. The suspension though so short, has convinced me how much I am interested in the renewal. You may depend too, upon never being troubled again with ridiculous apologies and excuses. You have cured me entirely of that foolish

pride, which was hurt by corresponding with a fine writer. I am sensible that it would be difficult for you to find an *equal* correspondent, and I acknowledge, with gratitude, your readiness in stooping to those who are unable to rise to you. In fine, I have adopted your opinion, that familiar letters may, with propriety, be incorrect, or, in Mr. Pope's words, that „The Letters of Friends are not the worse for being fit for none else to read;“ and the certainty that none else *will* ever peruse my letters, has made me perfectly easy in that respect.

Enclosed I have taken the liberty to send a few trifling remarks made by way of journal, during our little tour. They will inform you how my time has been spent, since I had last the honour of subscribing myself your most obedient.

To * *.

You must indeed regard * with a partial eye if you prefer it to other places, when you are just come from seeing several finer. I thank you for your ingenious and entertaining remarks; and will return them, presuming, by the different writings, that you have no copy.

And are you really so partial to * ? Shall I put you to the test? Come, and pay it a visit this summer. Here are some alterations on which I should like your opinion. I expect Mr. and Mrs. * * * ; and shall be glad if their company, or any other inducement should draw you hither. Consider of this invitation. Don't you think in your heart, that mankind would be happier, if they sacrificed more to friendship and less to punctilio.

You suppose that I enjoy myself better here than in town. I *do* in many respects: but shall I own (it is without *repining*) I am not superlatively happy any where. Once, indeed

Ah! happy hours, beyond recovery fled,
What share I now that can your loss
repay!

I never arrive at this place without some such thoughts as the above; and at times, in my solitary rambles, I find them too deeply impressed on my memory. Even at this instant but no more You have an intelligent mind, and a feeling heart: You will comprehend my meaning, and perhaps add one generous tear to those which involuntarily drop from the eyes of your friend.

To *.

O the soft commerce! O the tender ties!
Close twisted with the fibres of the heart,
Which broke, break *them*, and make it
pain to live!

I Cannot tell you how many tears I
shed over the most affecting lines that
ever were written, I wept from sympathy,
from too keen a sense of that sorrow,
which I hoped *you* had no longer
felt. I thought *your* griefs had, by the
flow and lenient hand of Time, been
changed into a remembrance rather sweet
than painful,

which sooth'd with tend'rst thought your
aching breast,

And built delight on woe. — — —

I am concerned to find it otherwise, and
am at present in so pensive a mood, that
I foresee this letter will be nothing but

a string of melancholy reflections. My breast harbours more griefs than one, and it will be some relief if you suffer me to confess, that I still mourn incessantly a loss to which the world believes me thoroughly reconciled, or rather that it must have been wholly absorbed in one more recent. How are they mistaken! I had two altars in my heart. The flame of conjugal affection never eclipsed that of the *filial*; nor was the extinction of it more painful. A number of alleviating circumstances but this is not a subject to be dwelt on. I was only going to observe, that no calamity can more forcibly, more lastingly, affect a person of my disposition, than the sudden death of a friend by whom we *knew* that we were beloved. I have not been wholly exempt from other trials, and may therefore venture to form a judg-

ment. The loss of fortune, or indeed any disaster that affects one's self alone, leaves many resources. There is a moderation to be shewn which enables one calmly to bear the suffering, or a noble firmness which raises one above compassion. The natural *vanity* of the human heart will sometimes console us in adversity. Self-admiration is often a powerful comforter, but wholly ineffectual against the stroke which lays one who loved us in the dust. We are then awed by humility. We call to mind the good qualities of the deceased, which „brighten as they take their flight:“ *our own* shrink from the comparison, and we are ready to enquire why we should be yet favoured with an existence of which they are deprived. Again, though we put selfishness out of the question, and the delight, never more to be known,

which their friendship afforded, yet still we find causes enough to justify unceasing regret. In the words of an admired author. „We consider, with afflictive anguish, the pain we may unthinkingly have given them, and now cannot alleviate: and the losses we may have caused, and now cannot repair. We recollect a thousand endearments which before glided off our minds without impression, a thousand favours unrepaid, a thousand duties unperformed, and wish, vainly wish for their return, not so much that we may receive, as that we may bestow happiness, and recompense that kindness which before we never understood.“

If we add to this the reflection, that they were summoned from a state of being in which they were useful, and in which they would gladly have continued

longer, it increases our trouble to its highest degree, since almost every event, and even the most pleasing events, may revive their ideas, with all the bitterness of ompassionate grief. The various charms of nature which *they* no more must behold, seem too lose their lustre; and every enjoyment, because *they* cannot partake it, appears insipid.

In short, I believe it very possible for one to become such a prey to sorrow, as to think it wrong to seek consolation. This however is not *my* case. I have just been *seeking* consolation. Pardon me; for it has been at your expence!

To * *

Something too much of this.

I Shall not re-peruse your letter, and am sorry that I gave you occasion to write it.

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How came you by so much more sensibility than is necessary to your happiness? You are a young woman, and, in all probability, may reckon upon many years of life. It is not for *you* to talk of „un-
 ceasing regrets,“ nor to indulge a habit of melancholy that cannot be shaken off. You must look *forward*. I will venture to prognosticate that there are many happy days in store for you, many bright hours in reserve. Beware how you *willfully* obscure them by unavailing sorrow.

If your vanity bore any proportion to your attractions, I should represent to you, that a melancholy air adds not to *your* charms but rather eclipses them. I would say to you, (with *Malvolio*) „Thy smiles become thee; therefore, in my presence, smile always, dear now my sweet, I pry thee.“ This is not pleasantry, for you really look infinitely hand-

former for cheerfulness, and when earnestly talking, or attentively listening, your face illuminated with smiles . . . but I will not flatter; too often have I seen this sun-shine unseasonably overcast by the cloud of thoughtfulness.

Let me hear from you soon, and in a more sprightly strain. Adieu.

To *.

I obey your obliging command of writing *soon*, but as it is not just now in my power to assume a *sprightly strain*, this will be a very short trespass on your patience.

I mean only to apologize for my neglect in not having acknowledged the honour of your invitation to *. There is no reason why I should be insensible of that favour, though, alas! there is, at

the same time, *no reason why I should accept it.*

Another apology occurs to me this moment (which I intended making before your prohibition of them); it is for the frequent use of quotation. I am very apt to express myself in other people's words, merely because they occur more readily, and seem better than my own. I wish to know your opinion on this head; 'tis not enough that you occasionally *practise* quotation; the question is, whether you allow it in a general, an unlimited degree to your correspondent.

To * *.

I allow to my fair correspondent not only the free use of quotation, (which, in familiar writing requires no apology) but every advantage, every indulgence she

can devise; and all too little for the satisfaction her correspondence affords.

Your letter which came yesterday, awakened me from a very pleasing meditation on the rise, progress, and present state of *our* friendship, in which I had concluded it was established on so solid a basis, that neither time or chance (one accident excepted) could ever destroy it; and thus I argued the matter:

Friendship between two persons of the same sex, though extremely easy to be formed, is liable to dissolution by a thousand accidents, from which ours is secure. Sometimes a difference in taste, sometimes too great a similarity, sometimes interest, and sometimes love, will unite the sacred knot. Friendship between those of differing sex, is harder to form and to preserve. Put consanguinity out of the question, and where

will you find your friends? Single or married, old or young, if they are of equal age, their sentiment is not friendship it is either *too cold*, or *too hot*. Again, if their age differs considerably, their tastes will, in general, be too opposite. Will a young man seek for *animated pleasure* in matronly conversation? Can a matron be supposed to relish the wild sallies of youth? The very idea of such a connexion is ridiculous; but if adopted to some degree, only the *sex* of the parties exchanged, I hope it will not appear so.

Let us suppose that on the ground of long acquaintance, a strict and more particular friendship is formed, between an old man tolerably free from the vices of *his* age, and a young lady still freer from the foibles of *her's*. We ought to suppose, that they are both disengaged

from the conjugal tie, and their sentiments should be pretty much alike upon all subjects. We will allow the lady to *fancy herself* in some respects inferior, particularly in learning or knowledge; because that supposition, adding weight to the experience of a friend, will produce trust, counsel, and reciprocal confidence, all which are a powerful cement to friendship: and we may suppose also, that she is enabled to disclose her thoughts freely upon all subjects, without the least impropriety; *he* being, from the very nature of things, absolutely disinterested in her regard, and incapable of any other sentiment than a lively generous esteem, which can never disturb the repose of either.

And now, pray what is your opinion of such a connexion? Is it not well formed for *duration*? Yea verily, and the

rather for its being of a gentle and placid kind, forming, as somebody has said, „no higher expectations than human nature can answer,“ and consequently free from the disquiets and jealousies which too often extinguish *violent* friendships and romantic love.

I had not half done with my subject, but am very unexpectedly interrupted, and as unexpectedly coming suddenly to town. I think to see Mrs. *** on Friday afternoon Need I say more? I can have no other opportunity of seeing you. Adieu.

To the same.

I cannot restore your letter of this morning, for I put it into the fire the mo-

ment I had read it; being loath to *remember* that *your* pen had ever given me disturbance.

Think not that I condemn your *motive* for writing. Friendship will sometimes be officious: pardon this expression. I saw that you were concerned for me last night, but as the occasion (though too well known) did not escape my lips, it is more remarkable, pardon me again, that you should trouble yourself to so little purpose.

There are some kinds of sorrow that will not admit of consolation. To one who has received a wound that he knows to be incurable, (unless the *sovereign Physician* should pour in the wine and the oil) how troublesome are the applications of empirics, and how impatiently does he listen to their prescriptions! Pardon me yet again for this allu-

tion; but indeed, my good friend, you are not qualified You remember what *Constance* says,

He speaks to me that never *had*

Experience alone can qualify but I desire not any of my friends to be so qualified. NO. God is my witness, I do not wish even the party in question to know by *experience*.

How sharper than a serpent's tooth
 impossible to proceed

As for your allusion to the parable but I cannot say any thing about it.

You imagine, perhaps, that this particular instance I cannot write why, why did you give me the occasion?

Two o'clock.

What a wretch am I! how fortunate that I did not send away the above till I had recovered my senses! It is but this moment I recollect having desired (as I led you down stairs) that you *would* write; that you *would* „minister to a mind diseased.“

Pardon me now, once for all, my most amiable friend. I will not keep back my letter. I know you have magnanimity enough to excuse and pity me. Besides, I have an unhappy *additinal* cause

With the strictest the most jealous secrecy have I hitherto preserved *this* hoard of sorrow; but I am now almost tempted to pour it, without reserve, into your friendly bosom, and seek the long lost charm of sympathy. I know not what to resolve I will meet *Dispatch* in his return, and if he tells me

you are alone, I drink tea with you. But do not lead to the subject, I conjure you. Let the impulse of the moment determine whether it shall *ever* be disclosed, Adien.

To the same.

How unreasonable is your friend! He expected to see you but once, he has already seen you twice, and is now pining with regret because he cannot have a third interview. But what is this urgent business that sends you galloping away, and in a stage-coach too, the worst of all vehicles, at the very instant when we ought to have met? I must set off myself to-morrow I wish I could but contrive . . . and why not? Enough . . . don't be surprised.

„I'll meet thee at Philippi.“

To *.

I am returned already, much sooner indeed than I expected: but what am I to say my *humble friend*! You do not expect an acknowledgment? I suppose there hardly ever was such an instance of . . . I don't know what . . . and yet believe me, I was more pained than obliged; but I hope you suffered no inconvenience.

The *woman* unfolded herself at last. She keeps a shop at L. in W. and the *man*, as *she* told me, has a place in the navy-office. I wonder what but as Hamlet says. „There is no wonder; or else all is wonder.“

I expect the honour of a line from you very soon, and shall be happy to hear that you are in perfect health.

To * *.

Be happy, for you have the honour to hear that I am in perfect health.

Seriously, I am tolerably well; I got here in very good time, and moreover I have lost the cough, which was so judiciously pronounced to be *a troublesome companion*.

You say nothing of your own health, but I flatter myself you are well. Your constitution, though delicate, seems naturally good. Be careful to cherish a blessing, without which you can relish no other.

I have frequently wished, and more within these few days than ever, (excuse this abrupt introduction) that you could *conveniently* make some little alteration in your manner of living, and

appear more in the world. You know my reasons for this wish. Let me once again urge them to your consideration. Recollect also, what Mrs. *** said to you concerning the „folly, sin,, and danger of being righteous overmuch.“ It was once hinted to me, but not by *her*, nor do I enquire into the truth of it, that your annual expence in *charity* would keep you a *carriage*.

Now I think but you know my thoughts already. A little more eclat, a little more folly and impertinence, a great deal more freedom and satisfaction.

Adieu.

To *.

Having nothing at present worth communicating to my noble friend, I shall

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only desire he will not credit an idle report, and then submit to his perusal

A F A B L E.

Once upon a time a poor widowed linnet (who unfortunately lost her mate in the barbarous *shooting season*, and who was not inclined to seek another) found great difficulty in keeping the possession of her own solitary nest. She had moreover the ill-fortune to be entangled unawares in a *net*, which proved mostly fatal to birds of her size; for the smaller ones often crept through the meshes, while those of superior size and strength could break the net and escape. In this distress she applied to an eagle, that dwelt in the *forest* adjacent, by whom she was slightly known. This generous bird readily gave his assistance towards extricating her from the *net*, and afterwards continued to shew her great coun-

tenance and favour. Being unused to the conversation of linnets, he thought her rather more cleaver than the generality of that species, and even imagined that she might prove an agreeable acquaintance.

Every one that knows any thing of natural history knows that birds, like the human race, have many different degrees or classes of rank and precedence. The eagle, regardless of this, continued to visit the linnet, and in process of time, desirous of more *frequent interviews*, became urgent with her to remove into his neighbourhood, among the birds of distinction, alledging that she was *extremely well qualified* to figure in a higher sphere. The linnet knew better, but at length, with infinite reluctance, she yielded to over-persuasion, and forsaking her peaceful thicket, was introduced by

the eagle to the beaumonde of the feathered creation.

The novelty of the scene engaged a little attention at first; but soon, too soon, the grand mistake became visible. The linnet *was not qualified*. She could not sing like the blackbird, she could not display the rich plumage of the goldfinch, she could not converse with the deep-bearded falcon, nor join in the music of the nightingale.

A thousand beaks were now opened against her, a thousand reasons given for her sudden attempt at *politesse*, and all equally unfavourable. She could see the eagle, 'tis true, every day, but that was no comfort, for every day brought new proofs that she was no companion for *him*. He wished her a hundred times at that distance, in which alone her merit appeared conspicuous; but the removal

was not without its difficulties. The birds whose society she had left, were now equally prejudiced against her, and she had neither spirit nor interest to make new friends. Alas for the poor linnet: disregarded by one party, disowned by the other, she expired with mere shame and vexation; acquitting her benefactor, and condemning only her own folly!

To * *.

I am delighted with your Fable; there is a singular, a very *striking* ingenuity in the construction of it; but like other pieces of *ancient* writing, (for you know birds have not spoke for some ages) it is liable to divers readings, at the pleasure of different critics. I could propose two emendations, one respec-

ting the *eagle* as you call it, but which according to *Le Pere* and *La Mere*, never classed so high, and, in fine, was but a *blackbird*; and if you consult that venerable and decisive critic, Father *Ti-me*, you will find him give a different *catastrophe* to the fable; making the blackbird to die first, and to reproach the linnet with *not having accepted his proposal*, and rendered more happy that short time which his advanced age would allow him to expect in the forest of life. I shall not however attempt to influence *your* judgment by these remarks. Continue to read your fable just as you please.

But it will not be amiss to assure you, that I desire not a more frequent intercourse *merely* through selfishness. I am vain enough to imagine that I could occasionally add to *your* satisfac-

tion; for you have often very politely expressed pleasure in my company, and seemed amused by the anecdotes which my acquaintance with former times enabled me to communicate, But I will not urge this matter farther, nor ever desire you to do any thing irreconcilable with your own judgment. Adieu.

To *.

You are infinitely obliging to drop a subject on which I should be at a loss to say more. It is very certain that your conversation would at all times contribute to my improvement and happiness; and yet but what would I say we have dismissed the subject.

I am not however provided with another; and must consider a little be-

fore I can determine upon what species of nothingness to trouble you with.

Pray have you read *Emily Montague*? an important question, no doubt;— but I ask it only with a view to obtain your opinion of Mrs. Brooke's writings in general. I cherish a kind of vanity (and hope it is not inexcusable) with regard to the merit of my own sex; and feel it gratified by every successful effort of female genius. You will laugh at my carrying this chimerical pride so far; but I actually triumph in the notion that the state of literature in England was never more flourishing than in the reigns of *Elizabeth* and *Anne*.

I am not equally partial to the productions of modern writers of the other sex; and have sometimes wondered to hear you so liberal in their commendations. But one reason is, I am too apt to compare them with their immediate predecessors,

many of whom, beheld at this favourable distance, and advantaged by *your* accounts of them, seem to me above all comparison or imitation.

And pray, having mentioned comparison, let me ask whether we have not at present, *comparatively* speaking, *almost* as many good authors of the one sex as of the other. *Brooke, Griffith, Macaulay, Carter, Montague, &c. &c.* The characters of the two last have been long established with me, because they have received the honourable stamp of *your* approbation. Upon the whole, do we not stand some chance of sharing your laurels?

To * *.

Yes, I have read *Emily Montague*, and with a great deal of pleasure. Mrs. *Brooke* is a most ingenious woman. Her works are disgraced by the common appellation

of novels. They are amiable and interesting pictures of life and manners, not absolutely perfect in resemblance, but sketched by the pencil of benevolence, and tinged with the delicate colouring of refined sentiment. Her descriptions of *Canada* in this work would do honour to an historian. She transports our imagination thither. We listen enraptured to the falls of *Montmorenci*.

Without answering your *comparative* question, I will allow that the ladies you name, and a few others, seem likely enough to crop *some* of our laurels. I wish them all proper encouragement: but your sex is sufficiently formidable without the aid of letters; and the consequence might be dangerous if you encroached *too far* upon our province.

You speak of Mrs. *Macaulay*. She is a kind of prodigy. I revere her abi-

lities. I cannot bear to hear her name *sarcastically* mentioned. I would have her taste the exalted pleasure of universal applause. I would have statues erected to her memory; and once in every age I would wish such a woman to appear, as a proof that genius is not confined to sex . . . but . . . at the same time . . . you'll pardon me, we want no more than *one* Mrs. Macaulay.

I do not apologize to *you*, my fair friend, for this expression. It detracts nothing from female merit, and you must allow that, generally speaking, each sex appears to most advantage in the sphere particularly assigned it by Providence.

For contemplation he, and valour form'd,
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace.

I come now to another part of your letter, and must tell you, that I am not yet so much of *an Old Man* as to refuse

praise to all modern productions. We have authors now living whose works will survive them, and receive from the next age the applause which they solicit in vain from the present. That favourable distance you speak of, and the dark veil of death cast over natural imperfections, are wonderful softeners of criticism, especially towards the productions of real genius, which can never diminish in value.

Shakespeare is the most striking instance of this truth. How gradual his progress from neglect to admiration, to reverence, almost to idolatry! But in truth, (though no writer could *deserve* more) he owes most of his fame to the singular advantage of a *practical commentator*, and must certainly be content to divide *his* laurels with *Garrick*.

I have written enough at this time, or I would mention some of our mo-

dern writers whose works I like best, and
 their several merits. I shall mention
 one, though at the risk of offending
 you, by remarking the capriciousness of
 your sex. 'Tis the author of *Sermons to
 Young Women*. You are indebted to this
 gentleman for two volumes of more
 elegant instruction than has appeared
 since the days of *Addison*. He has held
 up to you a mirror ingeniously contruc-
 ted and exquisitely polished, in which
 you may behold every feature of your
 minds, and improve them to the stand-
 ard of perfection. At the first publica-
 tion of these sermons, recommended by
 novelty and fashion, I met them in
 every house; I saw them upon every
 toilette. But where are they now; and
 how fell they into disgrace! Alas, they
 have been published more than two
 years; they are become *antique*; they
 are lost, neglected, or forgot.

My letter is unreasonably long, but, speaking of modern merit, I cannot forbear telling you (though you will hear it sooner perhaps by the news-paper) that *Powell* the player is dead. He will be very much lamented. A good actor is more generally missed than a good writer. I must own that I feel myself extremely concerned for his loss. We can hardly forbear interesting ourselves about those whose talents are publicly exhibited for our entertainment; while we are too often wholly indifferent to the more amiable characters of private life. Thousands, like me, will acknowledge that they „could have better spared a better man;“ and they ought as freely to acknowledge the selfishness of their motive. Poor *Powell*! He was rather a *pleasing* than a *great* actor; but he had not reached the summit. That

Theatre suffers greatly. Your favourite, Mrs. *Arne*, was an irreparable loss to it. I shall never lose the idea of that sweet little girl in some particular characters . . . characters so well adapted to *her*, that I should not have patience to see any body else *attempt* to play them.

And *you* will not have patience with *me* if I write such long letters; so adieu.

To *.

YOUR reflection on Mr. Powell's death, reminding me very forcibly of the brevity and uncertainty of human life, brought on that pensive frame of mind which I am but too apt to indulge, wherein every amusement and pursuit of this transitory state appears beneath

the regard of a rational being. I say, too apt to indulge, because a *constant remembrance* of these things might unfit us for the common offices of life, and detach us wholly from society.

Who that considers the unsteadiness of the soul and the frailty of the body, with the relation each bears to the other, that when the latter is afflicted by pain or sickness, the former is often a prey to fear and doubt: or that while the body appears sound and healthy, the soul may make an *unprepared* exit; who that deeply considers these things can avoid melancholy? Who, again, (says the moralist) that, considers the limited space of our existence, in comparison with eternity, but must behold with contempt the bustle that is made about passing this short period, and the various aims and ambitions that are crow-

ded into it?" Our whole extent of being (continues he) is no more in the eye of *him* who gave it, than a scarce perceptible moment of duration; and this reflection alone is sufficient to destroy our attachment to the world, to render its grandeurs contemptible, and to make one remain stupified in a poise of inaction, void of all designs, of all desires, of all friendships.

It is well therefore for mankind that they do not long retain these ideas, that their passions flow in and destroy their philosophy but whither am I running, and why do I thus tire you with trite and unconnected observations? I will put an end to them and to my letter, for I know not how to enter upon any other subject: your literary remarks would in a more cheerful hour have suggested many; but I can at present only return my acknowledgments for them,

It occurs to me just now, that I never transcribed that speech from *Zingis* which you requested when I was commending it; perhaps you have seen it ere now; but my time is of little consequence; and it will help to fill up the paper.

Ovifa contemplating the death of her
Brother.

If e'er the spirit of a warrior slain
Journey'd in storms across the troubled sky,
Last night my brother *Zangon* pass'd this place,
And call'd *Ovifa* home. The voice was deep
As when high *Arol*, shaking all his woods,
Speaks to the passing thunder. Through my
soul

A pleasing horror ran — . . . Perhaps not long
Ovifa tarries here — . . . The silent tomb
Is not the house of sorrow. — Airy form
Of him who is no more! Where dost thou
dwell?

Rejoicest thou on golden skirted clouds?

Or is thy murmur in the hollow wind?

Where'er thou art, mine ear with awful joy
Shall listen to thy voice! — Descend with
night,

If thou must shun the day. O stray not far
From the remains of *Annac's* failing line!

I fancy you will discover a great deal of *poetical* merit in this passage, and allow that it unites the sublime and beautiful.

To * *.

Without waiting your answer to my last, I write to congratulate you on your approaching nuptials. . Mrs. *, who came hither last night, informs me that you are on the point of marriage with Mr. ****. I was *astonished*; not at the event, for it is more surprising that you should remain three years a widow; but I rather

G 2



expected that you would have acquainted that is, I did not immediately consider how chary the ladies are of their love-secrets; and indeed I had no right to expect so much confidence, therefore I beg you will not apologize on that account.

Mrs. * says, you were at first averse to the proposal; but the persuasion of your friends, and the *amiable character* of your lover, has left no doubt of its success; in fine, that Mr. **** had told *her*, last week, that he would never relinquish his pretensions.

Strange indeed, if such gallant perseverance did not carry its point. I must not venture to write again, lest I should excite his jealousy, and be mistaken for a rival. But by his good leave, I will just call when I come to town, with my verbal compliments.

I suppose I shall hardly know you again. Adieu now to grey lustrings and plain linen! Welcome lace, jewels, and brocade! I must own I am impatient to see this brisk youth, who has thus opportunely,

Step'd in with his receipt for making
smiles,

And blanching fables into bridal bloom.

I hear he has a good estate, and is „very much of the gentleman.“ There was no doubt of your making a good choice. I have only to repeat my congratulations, and wish you all possible happiness, being very sincerely

Your Friend and humble Servant,

I only wait the receipt of your next letter, to return . . . it is this moment put into my hands.

I have read it attentively; but discover no confirmation of the news. Let

me now see what I have been saying to you on the supposition. —

How petulant! but I will not suppress it. After all, I *am* a little hurt by your want of confidence. Yet perhaps it is not true . . . it seems unlikely . . . you would not have wrote in so grave a style . . . Tell me . . . but be ingenuous . . . Tell me the whole affair It will not disturb *me* why should it I make myself ridiculous . . . Pray do not keep me in suspense.

Adieu.

To*.

Upon what circumstances Mrs. * founded her intelligence I cannot possibly imagine, nor how she came to know so much more of the affair than myself. Had I deliberated a single moment on

Mr. ****'s proposal, I should certainly have mentioned it to your Lordship; and as it was, intended it, the first time I had the honour of seeing you.

I don't know what he might say to Mrs. * last week, but this week, at my house, when I *repeated* a positive refusal of his suit, he acquiesced in it like a man of sense and a gentleman, commending my plain dealing, and promising never to renew a solicitation that he saw disagreeable.

He set off yesterday for M—p—r with his sister, Lady **, who is ordered thither for the recovery of her health.

I have never seen him above half a dozen times; and am sorry even for these interviews, since they have produced such an unpleasing consequence. I am *hurt* beyond measure by your letter The manner of expression . . . The

supposition of my concealing such intelligence or that I could listen to offers of marriage. How little are my sentiments known to one whom I thought perfectly acquainted with them! Married! and *you* to give credit! — *Married!* I should *indeed*

— be dull of heart,
Tasteless and gross as earth, to think with
patience,

Without abhorrence, of a second Hymen!“

I have never, 'tis true, made any formal declaration against marriage, but on *this occasion* it becomes me to say, that the man lives not upon earth whose name I would accept in exchange for that with which I have the honour to subscribe myself your Lordship's most obliged and obedient humble Servant,

* . . . *

To * *,

Cupid and *Death*, says the fabulist, happening to sleep at one time in the same retreat, their *arrows*, being scattered on the floor, became intermingled; and each by mistake, took some of the other's. Hence the occasional mortality of *young* persons, and the dotage of *old* ones.

I was fearful, t'other day, that the grim king of terrors, intending to cut my frail thread of existence, had only wounded me with a shaft of *Cupid's*: such uneasy sensations did the thoughts of your marriage occasion; but I was mistaken, and am glad to discover, that my uneasiness arose solely from your supposed want of confidence.

You now, I think, seem to harbour *my* opinion of second marriages, but

with less reason. *You* might chance to marry happily, and I beg you, my dear child, to believe, that such a circumstance would give me infinite pleasure; that is, if you consulted me on it, and let me busy myself about your settlements, etc.

After all, I fear there is a little dissimulation; and why should I dissemble? . . . Adieu for the present; I am going to walk and to *consider*.

I have been re-perusing your letter, my fair friend, under the shade of a spreading oak, and there came to a resolution of entrusting you with my real sentiments concerning it.

You have *voluntarily* disclaimed all thoughts of changing your condition, and I hope, therefore, that it is no breach of friendship or delicacy to say, that I *rejoice at it*.

You must not, however, enquire too strictly after my *reasons* for saying so; they are scarcely known to myself: for what 's so deceitful as the heart?

The late Mr. * *, (of whom you must undoubtedly have heard) upon a young lady's refusing his addresses through favour of another, (who yet, for prudential reasons, was not much encouraged) presented her with a handsome portion to enable her to marry that other. So at least goes the story, and I am ready enough to believe it, fancying that I could have acted just in the same manner. What greater consolation to a disappointed lover, than to render happy the object of his love, and awaken in her soul a tender and lively gratitude. And it might have gone farther; for had the lady's notions of honour borne any *resemblance* to those of Prince Prettyman in

the Rehearfal, ſhe would certainly have broke with the favoured lover, and married Mr. * *.

If you ſhould aſk me now, why I have mentioned this anecdote I ſhould be puzzled to answer you, for it bears no reſemblance to the affair in queſtion. Perhaps it was to obſerve, that the circumſtances being wholly different, I could not have made any merit to myſelf, nor received any recompenſe for the advantages I ſhould have loſt by your marriage. Do you aſk, what are theſe advantages? Your correſpondence; this familiar intercourſe, from which I derive a thouſand innocent pleaſures, and *that* place in your eſteem which I would fain *flatter* myſelf I poſſeſs, and which it is my *ambition* to preſerve.

You will not miſinterpret what I have now written. I mean not to

shackle your affections, or vitiate your opinions. I despise the ridiculous doctrine of Platonic love, and would no more be a Platonist than a libertine. All I contend for is the preference in friendship. You will allow there is sometimes a difference even in the *nature* of the sentiment. That which attaches me to you could not perhaps be easily defined: nor is a definition necessary. You may return it exactly in kind, without bewildering your fancy or endangering your peace.

Adieu. I pardon the formality of your subscription, having (very probably) given the example . . . and I would apologize for the *style* . . . „*the manner of expression*“ in my last . . . but . . . how can I be vain enough to imagine that it disturbed you!

To *.

Having company who will prevent my writing by the Diligence to-morrow, I take the liberty of returning by Dispatch my sincere but hasty thanks for your most obliging favour.

I am flattered extremely by your generous professions of regard, and equally delighted with your approbation of my conduct, or more properly speaking, with your acquitting me from the charge of levity in sentiment.

It will ever be *my* "ambition" to deserve *your* good opinion ; having long adopted this maxim of an indisputable judge, that "*The thoughts of wise men are the true measures of glory.*"

To *.

I am to thank you for a piece of flattery so very delicate, that I could not avoid reading it with pride and pleasure. These elegant compliments, "where more is meant than meets the ear," are of all others, most insinuating. I never expected that sentence to be so applied.

But do you know that I am coming to town again? You will know it very soon; for I shall make you one of my first visits, and to save the trouble of *introducing* the subject, will acquaint you before-hand with my principal errand. I am under the necessity of altering some dispositions of my effects and intending to bequeath you a small token of my sincere regard, I would chuse to do it in the manner most agreeable to your

self. Nor let your delicacy be hurt by the idea of this legacy. Remember you will not receive it till a time when the *disinterestedness* of the motive will appear; but as Heaven only knows how near that time may be, it behoves me not to delay my intention. Adieu.

To the same.

„The first wrote, wine is the strongest: the second wrote, the king is strongest, the third wrote, women are strongest.“ —

The third was in the right: neither wine or the king would have been strong enough to have altered my resolution, but I submit to my *female* conqueror.

Yet observe, that in this acquiescence with your pleasure, I am (like our general parent)

----- Not convinc'd,

But fondly overcome by female charm.

I yield not to the strength of your reasoning, but to the force of your persuasion, and now that I no longer *hear* you, am wishing to renew my intention.

Let this, however, rest at present; for there is another thing that *must* be mentioned. I had not courage enough for it yesterday ... do not be offended. To-morrow, about noon, a carriage will stop at your door. It is your's. Your arms are on it. It was built for you. You cannot refuse it. The horses are the colour you approve. They were bought on purpose. I cannot endure your going about in stage-coaches. Pardon this foible in your friend, and make him happy by accepting his present.

To *.

I have sent for Dispatch to bring you this, for I cannot wait the Diligence. Recall your orders, I entreat you. Let it not come. I will not accept; I will not see it. Cruel obligation. Distressing generosity. What return . . . What acknowledgment? How could you *imagine* I would receive such a present? I need it not. I don't go about in stage-coaches. I have a chaise to come to town, and when there, find a chair more convenient.

I shall be at *** this evening. If you should chance to look in, let me read in your eyes the forgiveness of this *positive refusal*, and a benevolent concern for having given so much pain to my sensibility. If you cannot come, deign to call on me at * either Thursday, Fri-

day, or Saturday morning, to receive my humble apologies and most grateful acknowledgments.

To * *.

I left you very reluctantly yesterday, and had you *invited* me to dinner, should have broke my *engagement*. We had a mighty insipid feast. I went home very early, and ruminated all the evening upon your verses. But my memory is bad. Positively you must oblige me with another sight of them. Without ocular demonstration, I would not *believe* that you or any body could write such an extempore.

I have ordered Dispatch to bring you a coach and horses. Now don't be alarmed again. 'Tis not for you, but your little visitor. I hope she will not

mortify me by the refusal of a *toy*
you have done that effectually.

I am not in good spirits to day.
 The air seems *gross* to me and heavy.
 I have not, for some years, breathed
 freely in London, at least I fancy so,
 and intend to decamp very soon, I wish
 you could let me know when it will
 suit you to receive a tedious visit. I must
 drink tea and sup with you. Be alone;
 it is uncertain *when* we shall meet again.
 Adieu.

To *.

If I am to fix a time for receiving the
 honour of your visit, let it be Wednesday
 next. You will let me know whether
 that day is suitable; but I shall certainly
 be disengaged, and I think too,

you will then have the advantage of returning by the light of a *full moon*.

You had charmed my little guest by your condescending notice, and have now won her heart by your present. „She would give all the world, ay *twenty* worlds if she had them, to see you again, and thank you for it, and sit on your knee, and sing you another song.“ ’Tis an amiable little creature, and knowing enough for her age. „What a fine coach!“ said she; „O Ma’am, if it was but a *little* bigger, and the horses alive!“ *Why what shen?* „O then I’d get into it, and say, Here you Mr. Coachman, carry me to the place you come from. „I wonder,“ pursued she archly, „I wonder where he would carry me to?“ *I can’t tell really, but to the toy-shop perhaps.* She looked grave. „Ay, very likely, but I don’t want to go *there*.“

Need I apologize for this childish prattle? Will you not rather esteem it as a pleasing proof that the human heart is *very early* susceptible of gratitude.

To **.

I swear to you my amiable friend, that I have not, these twenty years, enjoyed so many happy hours successively, as I did last night in your company.

The variety of entertainment you provided, the elegant tranquility of the scene, the harmony of the invisible concert, the simplicity of the repast, the charms of your conversation . . I never saw you so sprightly, so animated Ah my fair friend! provide me no more such banquets . . . I should purchase them too dear.

What an odd compliment it is, to tell you I had a most agreeable ride home; I ought rather to say, I left you and happiness together; but it was no such thing; for the serenity of the air, the brightness of the moon, and the strength of some very pleasing ideas, inspired me with so much cheerfulness, that I perceived not the length of the way, and was even sorry to quit my reverie.

But how will you excuse yourself for making such a rake of me? and how long do you think it is since I lost a whole night's rest? Are these frolics suited to *my* time of life? You will say I might have gone to bed this morning. That's true; but the rising sun would have reproached me; and moreover — but your pardon . . . besides, *one* reason is sufficient.

My dear Mrs. **, I shall esteem it a very particular favour, if you will im-

mediately sit down, and acquaint me how *you* employ yourself, and what were *your* meditations, from the moment I left you till breakfast time. *Mine* are committed to paper, and if you desire it shall accompany my next letter.

I must also request copies of your garden-inscriptions. I know they are from Shenstoue and Akenfide, but I want to compare the alterations at my leisure.

Adieu. Accept a thousand acknowledgments, and hasten your answer.

To *.

If I did not comply with your request *immediately*, I should most probably decline it; but am just now so pleased and flattered by your obliging compliments that I cannot dispute your commands.

The moment, then, that your carriage was out of sight, I retired to my chamber, and as soon as all around me was quiet, I threw up the sashes for air, and began to walk very gravely backwards and forwards, endeavouring to recollect every circumstance of the evening, in order to censure or acquit my own behaviour and conversation. But this was not a very easy task; for the *Domestic Deity*, as Sterne most elegantly phrases it, „was either talking or *pursuing*, or was *in a journey*, or peradventure he slept, and could not be awoke.“

So I sat me down by the window, and watched the progress of the moon, who now,

Apparent Queen, unveil'd her peerless light
And o'er the earth her silver mantle threw.

Immediately several images of the poets, relative to this beautiful luminary, crowded into my thoughts; but I have more charity than to load you with the quotations.

I then imagined to myself, how far you were got by that time, and fancied that you (and perhaps numbers besides) were *just then* contemplating and enjoying the mild lustre of Cynthia.

The conscious moon, in every distant age,
Hath held a lamp to wisdom. —

These meditations at length brought on a suitable disposition for Reflection to assume the *censorial dignity*; and it was assumed. The trial lasted near an hour, when, after a full hearing, the defendant was acquitted of capital impropriety, but convicted of some trivial misdemeanors, as too great solicitude to please, a little affectation, more vanity,

and a large share of simple credulity. She was also indicted for having received too much satisfaction ; but pleaded in excuse, her intention of future self-denial: upon which the court broke up, without adjudging any *other* punishment.

Now morn, her rosy steps i'th' eastern clime,
Advanc'd.

I was not inclined to sleep, and scarcely knowing how to employ myself, I went softly down stairs, and took a few turns in the garden. Passing by the grotto, I chanced to espy on the table some flowers that you had gathered. They looked faded, but I thought that water and a little attention might revive them ; so I returned with them to my chamber, and presently after, addressing myself to sleep, had a comfortable repose of two hours before I arose to breakfast.

Here ends my journal, which I will send to you without reading it, lest I should repent of its unnecessary frankness. Let me add, that the flowers being quite revived, I have disposed them in a groupe, and am painting their portraits in water-colours, with this motto,

Live a little longer.

You desire copies of my inscriptions. I ought to mention, that the *tablets* are moveable, and very rarely exhibited; for the generality of my visitors have no notion of such things, and would make them a matter of *wonderment*.

This is the first:

O ye, who bathe in courtly blifs,
Or toil in fortune's giddy sphere,
Do not too rashly judge amiss
Of one who lives contented here,

Nor yet disdain the narrow bounds
That skirt this garden's simple pride,

Nor yet deride the scanty mounds
That fence yon waters peaceful tide,

The tenant of the shade forgive,
For wand'ring at the close of day,
With joy to see the flowers live,
And hear the linnet's temp'rate lay.

And O remember, that from strife,
From fraudulent hate, and frantic glee,
From every fault of polish'd life,
These rustie scenes are haply free.

The second bears the alterations better;
as you shall judge. Indeed the grotto
was made to the inscription, and not
that to the grotto.

To me, whom in their lays, the shepherds
call

Felicia, daughter of content and health,
This cave belongs. — The fig-tree and the vine,
Which o'er the rocky entrance downward shoot,
Exclude the beams of Phœbus. — Cowslips pale,
Primrose, and purple lychnis deck the green
Before my threshold; and my shelving walls

The honeysuckle covers. Here at noon,
 Lull'd by the murmur of my rising fount,
 I slumber. — Here my clust'ring fruits I tend,
 Or from the humid flow'rs, at break of day,
 Fresh garlands weave, and chase from all my
 bounds

Each thing impure or noxious. — Enter in,
 O stranger, undismay'd! and if a friend
 To virtue, not unwelcome shalt thou tread
 My quiet mansion; chiefly if thy name
 Wife Pallas and th' immortal muses own.

I finish this tedious letter, having
 nothing further to add or „*desire*,“ only
 that you will please to believe me, with
 the most respectful attachment,

etc. etc.

To * *.

And so you have no curiosity — at least
 you do not „*desire*“ — it's very well;
 and you certainly are — No — I will not

compliment you at the expence of your sex.

I will not oppress you with compliments of *any* kind; but I thank you for the little narrative, and am charmed beyond expression by your amiable frankness.

As for your *flower-piece*, (what an interesting, what an elegant thought!) remember that I bespeak it. You shall not refuse it me; I will keep it for ever as a pledge of your generous regard.

I am going out of town this very afternoon, to which I feel a secret reluctance that makes it more necessary.

„Il y a quelque fois dans le cours de la vie de si doux plaisirs et de si tendres engagements, que l'on nous défend qu'il est naturel de desirer du moins qu'ils fussent permis: de si grands charmes ne peuvent être surpassés que par celui de savoir y renoncer par vertu.“

Adieu, ma belle veuve, vous êtes
trop aimable!

To the same.

I shall not set out till to-morrow, and have two reasons for writing to you again.

I recollect some expressions in my letter this morning, that I fear will displease you. I stumbled upon them unawares, but they express *too much*, and almost imply the existence of a sentiment, wholly unbecoming my age, and your character. We somehow contract and retain a habit of what is called gallantry in speech; but 'tis ridiculous.— My good friend; I do *not* think you too amiable; I am absolutely disinterested in your regard; nor can I be painfully or

improperly affected by the united force of beauty, merit, and kindness.

You need not trouble yourself to answer this; I shall write again the moment I arrive. Only be so good to return the *inclosed*. It's the little picture you gave me so long ago. I have had the drapery altered, and though presume on your approbation, was willing you should see it before the artist is paid. Adieu.

To the same.

I am arrived, and am tolerably well; but have very little else to say to you. The *essential* in a letter of friendship may generally be comprized in very few words. I intend soon to give you a specimen

(not a pattern) of brevity in writing, at present *I have not time.*

In our last conversation but one, you were observing, (and perhaps by way of reproach) that I never wrote to you *like a writer*: that if by great chance we entered upon a subject of importance, either moral or literary, I never treated it in a serious or argumentative manner. All this is very true; and yet I have been far from thinking my fair correspondent

——— Not with such discourse
Delight; or not capable her ear
Of what was high; ———

But I have several correspondences of the head, and wanted one of the heart. I find so much pleasure in this indolent chit-chat, the spirit of which would wholly evaporate in improvement, that I wish to confine it to the most familiar

subjects, or, more properly speaking, not to confine it at all; for the least degree of restraint would produce delay, disgust, discontinuance. — You have more than once charged yourself with imitating my style; but, with submission it is just the reverse; for I often catch myself adopting your's: nor did I ever before this intercourse admire what may now be called *our* manner of writing; because it leaves the *meaning* too often wholly dependent on the genius or sensibility of the reader.

And now to convince you of my desire to oblige you in *all* respects, I inclose a manuscript for your more serious perusal, your opinion, your strict and unsparing criticism. You will please to return it by the Diligence on Sunday, with as many observations on it as shall occur, and at the same time, pray favour

me with a complete and *exact* catalogue of your *library*. This is a mighty whimsical request; but I want much to know your favourite authors. Adieu.

To *.

I am infinitely obliged to you for this last favour, and return the manuscript with my observations and the requested catalogue, all which have taken so much time, that I can only just transcribe a few hasty lines, written yesterday, and entreat you to let them pass without one single word of censure or commendation. They are beneath criticism.

The polish'd labour of this heav'n-taught mind

See the fam'd *Atticus* to *Mira* send,

And bid her freely censure or commend

What his creative genius has design'd!

And though unskill'd in science' mazy writ,

She all unequal to the task be found;

And though the work be with perfection
crown'd

By wisdom, learning, elegance, and wit.

Yet not in vain he makes the gen'rous loan.

And not in vain the pleasing task requires,
Which gives her honour, lessens not his own,

And her wrapt breast with gratitude inspires:
So potent Phœbus bids the queen of night
Shine in the borrow'd beams of this reflected
light.

To * *.

Well, then, I will not praise your little sonnet, though it is *really* deserving: but I may thank you for the *observations*, which are extremely ingenious and valuable. If the work should ever *appear* (but that is unlikely) you would see how much I regard them.

But why should you entreat me to let your verses pass without notice. In my

opinion they are *not* below criticism, and I am in a criticising humour; yet 'tis the less necessary for me to indulge it with regard to this little piece, because your own judgment in these matters is exceedingly good, and I durst say you know the *exact* degree of its merit.

It is one thing to taste the perfection of an art, and another to excel *in* that art, but you might easily unite these attainments; and although I do not think poetry your *force*, nor would advise you to employ much *labour* in cultivating the laurels of Parnassus, yet now and then an occasional essay will be an agreeable amusement not only to yourself, but to as many as you shall think proper to oblige with a sight of your performances.

Adieu. Simply adieu: for I know not what epithet to salute you with. I

may say to you in the *very* words of Queen Elizabeth to the bishop's wife, „*Mistress I will not call you, and Ma Dame I must not call you.*“ More's the pity! Adieu. Pray observe and admire this quotation, for it is the best I ever made in my life.

To the same.

Have you a mind to hear a very ridiculous instance of the most trifling vanity?

I was so pleased with the sudden recollection, and *the aptness* of Queen Elizabeth's saying, that I sent away my letter this morning without its principal errand, which was to invite you to dine with us at * to-morrow se'nnight. I am not yet certain whether I shall be at *the Jubilee*; but in either case shall keep the

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Have you a mind to hear a very ridiculous instance of the most trifling vanity?

I was so pleased with the sudden recollection, and *the aptness* of Queen Elizabeth's saying, that I sent away my letter this morning without its principal errand, which was to invite you to dine with us at * to-morrow se'nnight. I am not yet certain whether I shall be at *the Jubilee*; but in either case shall keep the

above appointment, as it will be convenient in returning. and agreeable if I do *not* go, to meet those who have been there, and catch all their various reports before they circulate farther. Come therefore if you can; Mrs. *** will attend you; she talks of a party; I know you will not have the heart to refuse *her*? and silence shall give consent. But why silence? — Why, because I am composing *another letter*, which you must answer before we meet; and which will require a good deal of time and attention. The subject is of some consequence. I think to divide it into three several parts or sections, and would have you do the same by your reply, in order to preserve that clearness or perspicuity which ought to distinguish performances of this nature from essays of less importance. In a word, I am disposed to make a full

proof of your literary abilities. Go then,
study philosophy, and prepare yourself
to answer the challenge.

To the same.

Etes vous bien?

Je vous aime.

Dieu vous benisse.

The Answer.

Oui.

Je vous remercie:

Et le bon Dieu vous benisse encore.

To * *.

You will rejoice at finding your stray
sheep safely inclosed in the fold of this
letter; nor must you be angry with your
friends. I told you very truly, that, I
had not seen it: and Mrs. ***, with

equal veracity, protested that she had not got it; but we played the fable of the two thieves upon you; for she put it (unknown to me) into my pocket, and did not tell me of it till we were coming away.

I cannot however persuade myself to prolong your uneasiness, and have therefore returned it at this unseasonable hour, (and after *one* reading only) depending upon *your honour* for a second perusal. It *must* be finish'd, indeed it must. Mrs. *** declares that you were no longer about it than whilst she was dressing. Indeed, my friend, {you are but I durst not say what. I durst not say any thing more.

Good night! „a thousand times good night!“

Daughters of *Brittannia's* isle,
 Of ev'ry age and each degree,
 Leave your native plains awhile,
 And haste to *Shakespeare's* Jubilee.

O gather ev'ry beauteous flow'r,
 And roses fair with laurels twine,
 And rob each fragrant myrtle bow'r,
 To deck your poet's hallow'd shrine.

And let no gentle voice be mute
 In the full chorus of his praise,
 And let the sweetly sounding lute
 Your soft harmonious concert raise.

But first, arrang'd in decent throng.
 Repose on *Avon's* verdant side,
 (How oft to hear the poet's song
 Has *Avon* stopp'd his crystal tide!)

Repose, and listen to my lays;
 Trembling, I seize the vocal shell,
 And in peculiar strains of praise
 Your *Shakespeare's* merits aim to tell.

Let heroes sing his warlike pow'rs,
 Let kings his regal talents own,

Let poets, patriots, lovers - - -

Far diff'rent theme - - -

I sing the man, of taste refin'd,
Whom wise unerring nature made,
The judge, the friend of *woman kind*.

O master of the female heart,
To whom its ev'ry spring was known,
What rapt'rous joy didst thou impart
To those who once possess'd thine own,

How blest her lot, how envied now!
Who clasp'd in thee a darling heir,
Or shar'd thy tender plighted vow,
Or claim'd thy fond paternal care,

Ye virgins, pluck the freshest bays,
Ye matrons, deck his honour'd bier,
Ye mothers, teach your sons his praise,
Ye widows, drop the silent tear,

Now spread the immortal volumes wide,
And mark - - -

No female guilt deforms the scene,
 No female plots of terror rise,
 Save where he shews the murth'rous Queen
 Stain'd with ambition's *manly* vice.

E'en while he acts *th' historian's* part
 He smooths unnat'ral Regan's brow,
 And softens Cleopatra's art,
 And faithless Cressid's broken vow.

Nor parrial fact

Behold the lovely train appear.

With innocence Miranda charms;
 With virgin honour, Isabel;
 The filial heart Cordelia warms,
 And Portia's praise let *Wisdom* tell.

Bright shines the hymenæal flame
 When Imogen's distress is past,
 And vindicated Hero's fame,
 And Helen's patience crow'nd at last.

Thus different states are mov'd by turns;
 E'en aged hearts for Cath'rine glow;

And when distracted Constance mourns,
Maternal bosoms throb with woe.

But where, O Muse, can strains be found
T' express each virtue, charm, and grace
With which benignant *Shakespeare* crown'd
The female mind, the female face?

Let me restrain my grateful tongue,
And the exhaustless subject quit;
Let Celia's truth remain unsung,
And Rosalinda's sprightly wit.

More tragic scenes I now relate,
And tears of soft compassion crave;
O pity *Desdemona's* fate!
O weep on poor *Ophelia's* grave!

And check not yet the tender tear,
Nor yet the rising grief restrain?
O'er hapless *Juliet's* early bier,
Still let it flow, nor flow in vain.

When virtuous sorrow prompts the sigh,
And swells the gen'rous feeling heart,
She adds to ev'ry glitt'ning eye,
A charm beyond the reach of art.

Cetera defunt.

To * *.

I did not get home till very late last night, and was extremely fatigued.

Parties of pleasure are in my opinion the most unpleasant things in the world. Indeed, nothing can be agreeable to me that requires the least activity, unless it be in some degree interesting; and whenever I am busying myself to no purpose, I think on the labour of the *Danaides*.

The oftener I look on your *flower-piece*, the more I am charmed with it. Mr. * has pronounced it *beautiful*; and yet (so capricious is my taste) I have been

chusing a place [for it 'this morning,
where I scarcely any body will see it but
myself.

Have you seen your books? Do you
like them? They were to be sent during
your absence. Now you know why I re-
quested a catalogue; that I might not or-
der any you had. Your library was too
small; and if you scruple to accept this
trivial addition, I shall scruple to call
you my friend, or subscribe myself your's.

To *.

Your menace, my generous friend, has
its effect. I dare not *scruple* to accept
your present. But could I have divined
your reason for inquiring after my bo-
oks, I should certainly not have sent the
catalogue. As it is — if I must submit
— if you will not allow me to return

a few of the most costly, particularly the Natural History, I must endeavour to be easy—as easy as a mind not ungenerous can be under an oppressive weight of obligation.

I think, if I know my own heart, it is in these instances above affectation; nor is it destitute of sensibility I need not explain what you very well understand . . . *May I return any of the books?*

To * *.

I am afraid, by the style of your's that my last letter was *too authoritative*. I remember being in an ill-humour, but surely it extended not to you, nor could you misinterpret the *menace*

I know very well that you have less affectation and more sensibility than

half your sex; but have you not also rather too much punctilio? . . . Return the books! Return the Natural History! which, of all others, I marked out for your particular amusement, having heard you in a manner wish for it. You must *not* return any of the books, nor must you be uneasy at accepting them. You would not, if you were thoroughly acquainted with the disposition of the giver: for I think if (in your language) „I know my own heart,“ it feels for you all the *best parts* of the sentiments which form the different characters of a father, a brother, a guardian, and a lover. Are not these affection without authority, esteem without jealousy, watchfulness without interest, and tenderness without desire? But perhaps you do not like these *abstracted* notions, nor will, upon such terms, acknow-

ledge yourself my daughter, sister, ward or mistress. Continue then, my *friend*, and believe that I shall ever be your's.

To *.

Finding myself in a scribbling mood, I am going to write without waiting to hear from you, but shall not send away my letter till I have that pleasure.

I cannot *just now* recollect *who it was* that one of his friends complimented by saying, that „his entertainments pleased not only at the time he gave them, but the day after.“ I should have liked vastly to have been a guest at some of these entertainments, for I am not fortunate enough to find many that please at the time, much less in recollection. I am just returned from a visit, and have left a circle of company, all polite and accomplished, all in *Smirk's* words, fine in

figure, high in taste, *très magnifique* & *galant*. I have left this circle without pleasure or improvement, and reckon the time lost that I spent in it; yet was in good spirits all the while, and as talkative as any present.

And now you will expect me to give a reason for my dissatisfaction. Believe me, it is not that I think myself wiser or better than other people, nor am I just now unqualified for *polite conversation*; my late attendance on Mrs. *** having enabled me to give my required opinion on *most* of the fashionable topics.

But I mean to observe, that however well such kind of discourse may beguile the present moment (and it will not do *that* unenlivened by remark and repartee) it leaves no agreeable traces behind. It resembles „a swiftly passing

cloud, on which some faint beams of light have imprinted their weak and transient colours; “ while the animated conversations of real friendship remain fastened on the mind, and as the wise Man said of words that were fitly spoken, are like „apples of gold in pictures of silver.“ In fine, my peculiar disposition is such as would induce me (with Mr. Pope,) to value one tender well-meant word, above all that ever made me laugh in my life.“

Interrupted. — — Your letter. — —
 What shall I say to it? O my beneficent friend, you may guess its effects on the temper I have so artlessly confessed. Yes, I will accept your present, I will esteem — I will acknowledge but whither does my sensibility transport me? Allow me to break off — — —

Affamed of the inequalities in my
 own mind, I have often endeavoured to
 discover the same failing in others; and
 of all persons upon earth I am the most
 apt to compare myself with *Roussseau*.
 We certainly do resemble each other. I
 was very desirous of seeing him on that
 account, and regret that I did not. I
 can allow for all the peculiarities that so
 strongly mark his character. Like him
 I cannot avoid being fretful, haughty,
 uneasy, disturbed even by the shadow of
 an obligation; yet place the same circum-
 stance in a different light, it softens me
 into condescension, and overcomes me
 with joy. People of this very suscepti-
 ble cast have a thousand pleasures and
 uneasinesses of which others have no
 idea; but the latter too generally predo-
 minate, and verify these elegant and of-
 tenquoted lines:

Nor peace nor ease the heart can know,
 Which like the needle true,
 Turns at the touch of joy or woe,
 But turning, trembles too.

But the principal inconveniencies of strong sensibility are the absurdities of conduct it gives rise to, which though involuntary at the moment, are soon keenly felt, and severely repented. You will easily imagine I speak not of vices but follies; those little ridiculous follies of fancy, beyond the borders of custom, to which we are sometimes impelled, though sure of making a disgraceful retreat.

I was thinking of Rousseau this morning as I rambled before breakfast through the neighbouring fields. Two or three little birds were hopping about in the path. At my approach they fled to a greater distance — as I advanced they

fled farther—as I drew still nearer they took shelter in a hedge. I was concerned.—Why do ye fly me, gentle and apprehensive creatures? I would not captivate or injure ye—I would gladly contribute to your felicity. Observe, these were only my *thoughts*, but mark the sequel. „Roussseau,” said I, „would perhaps have *spoke* to the birds.” *Madam!* cried my attendant. I smiled at my own folly, and made some insignificant answer.

But I need not illustrate this weakness. 'Tis sufficient to say, that I am very seldom satisfied with myself, and should I, at any future time, peruse what I am *now* writing, it would most probably appear highly censurable and ridiculous.

Pray don't you think, (for I am unwilling to be quite singular) that my favourite Mr. Shenstone possessed a good

deal of this self-created uneasiness? I don't recollect ever hearing you say much about him or his writings. Was he not a good poet? His benevolence was certainly admirable, and illuminated all his works. I always peruse them with pleasure; with ten times the pleasure than more witty performances would give me. But this, I know, is because of my own deficiencies, not having a spark of wit, nor a grain of humour in my whole composition; nor indeed any qualification to entitle me (without great allowance of courtesy) to the honour of being styled *your* correspondent and friend.

To *.

I am going to write a long and particular answer to every part of your letter, though at the same time I have business

of much greater consequence that ought to engage my attention. You are not, however, obliged to me for this civility. I have recourse to it in my own defence, against a set of melancholy ideas, which I hope to dissipate by thus conversing with you; and shall then be more fit for what I could not at present undertake.

But, O frail and insufficient *Humanity*! thou who hast recourse to so many different expedients to support thyself in tolerable serenity, why aspirest thou not more ardently after *celestial* expedients? after the hope that remains steady and immoveable, the tranquillity that fadeth not away!

I think myself obliged, in the first place, by your sitting down to write before my letter came to hand, because it shews that you thought of me without being reminded.

You have by *this time*, recollected „*who it was*“ that his friends complimented etc. If I were not in a very grave humour, I could smile at that expression. — We are apt now to fancy that such a man must be *happy*. Elegance united with philosophy conveys this idea through the medium of *time*; because we see not the clouds of perplexity, error, doubt, fear, and sorrow that might secretly overshadow his happiness.

„The cup of felicity pure and unmixed, is by no means a draught for mortal man;“ nor can the utmost perfection of mortality *deserve* it. Sufficient for us, if with patience and resignation, we imbibe the intermingled sweets and bitters of our allotted potion, and find *hope* remain at the bottom!

We are so accustomed to call things by wrong names, that I am not surpri-

fed at your finding *solitude* in a *brilliant* *assemblée*, and *good* company the *worst* company of all; but you should consider by whom and for what end these circles are formed. It is very natural for people who are incapable of amusing themselves to associate with each other. They seek not *happiness*, but *amusement*, and expect no other satisfaction than barely employing the time which hangs heavy on their hands. But no more on this subject — 'tis the beaten track of the moralist, and is worn to the very edge.

I come now to your acknowledgment of my letter. — It flatters me — a gleam of satisfaction enlightens — but why — why did you break off abruptly? — Why could you not for *once* intrust a sincere friend with the *genuine* effusions of your heart.

How seldom do we discover to one another our real selves! Custom and education enwrap us in a thousand disguises, all more painful to an ingenuous mind, than the European habit to a savage, or fetters to a slave. Nature and sentiment revolt from this tyranny — occasionally they each endeavour to get free — their efforts are vigorous and sudden, agreeing with the impulse of the passions. — But reserve, who stands sentinel, gives quick alarm, and we continue the slaves of custom.

I believe I am writing nonsense — my thoughts wander far from the subject — but 'tis no matter — I shall write on.

Sensibility, or the characteristic of a sensible mind, is a fashionable and almost thread-bare topic. Much has been written, much is every day said about

it, and numbers affect to possess it, who have no *other* claim than thinking it a recommendation.

This observation does not extend to *you* my sensible friend, who do, in reality possess more than a necessary share. I only mention it, because you are „unwilling to be quite singular.“ There are people enough to keep you in countenance, by running into greater absurdities merely through affectation.

As for Rousseau, you injure yourself in a comparison with him. Not that I accuse him of much affectation, for his feelings are amazingly strong; but he has suffered what was once but a respectable weakness, to degenerate into a fixed habit of discontent, which is now the source of perpetual unhappiness to himself and others. Your feelings are as delicate, but less irritable than his.

Rousseau's peculiarity of temper unfits him for society, and conscious of this, he endeavours to loosen the bands which hold it together. But his doctrines make few converts; we discover instantly the spring from which they arise, and are content to let *him* remain *le solitaire* . . . It is fit it should be so. I cannot help esteeming Rousseau in spite of all his vagaries, and perhaps *for* some of them, but I would no more chuse him for an associate, than I would use constantly a fine porcelain vessel, if its owner stood as constantly by, desiring me not to break it.

I have insensibly written myself into better spirits, but must continue the medicine a little longer.

Pray why did you not *express* your desire of seeing Rousseau before he left us? It might very easily have been gra-

tified. I should have been happy to have brought you together, and am just now diverted by the thoughts of your interview, of which you may take the following for a description. Gravely presenting you to the philosopher, „See,“ I would say, „Monf. Rousseau, behold in this lady - - - - -

- - - - -
- - - - -
- - - - - !“

Caught by these sounds, he repeats *O sacred virtue!* and glances a look towards you. Your countenance strengthens his ideas — the singularity of his character overspreads it with an attention equally interesting and flattering — your eyes, invivified by curiosity and softened by complacency, must *penetrate* the susceptible soul of John James. He cries out! he embraces you with tears

of joy! You become his disciple, and I, perhaps, lose my correspondent.

See, by this inference, that I allow something of a sympathy in your taste, though not enough to justify a comparison. — What I have now been writing was to amuse myself; but I will tell you more seriously that I knew a character to which your's bears a much greater resemblance; it is that of the pious and ingenious Mrs. *Rowe*; nor will you think it bad counsel, if I advise you to improve the resemblance to perfection. May your life be as amiable, and your death as happy!

I have nothing to say with respect to your *self-depreciation*, being unwilling to charge you with the foible of *begging applause*; not that wit and humour are such very estimable qualities — but I will acquit you — and will believe you are not sensible of possessing either.

You inquire my opinion of *Shenstone*, and his writings. — Good — very good — you yourself have given them a just character. I esteemed — I regretted — I *still* regret him — and that for more reasons than you can possibly imagine. Alas! how many worthy people have I outlived! I pray God that *you* may never be added to their number!

Adieu.

To *.

The first part of your letter, my ever-honoured, my revered correspondent, shall pass without notice. I can sympathize, though I do not *inquire*; and whatever were the ideas that disturbed you, I wish not to recall them. Hastening, therefore, to the paragraph where you bestow such an unmerited compli-

ment, I acknowledge it most gratefully, and am fired with emulation to copy the illustrious pattern. How generous, how worthy of yourself are those wishes in my favour! O may they be answered!

I hardly know how to interpret what you say about begging applause. I hope you *do* acquit me; for indeed I can acquit *myself*, though I readily acknowledge a pleasure and pride in *your* approbation.

Letus sum laudaria laudato viro,

Searching for amusement, this morning, among the treasures of your beneficence, I found some verses in a poem of Mr. Whitehead's so extremely applicable to my thoughts, that I could not forbear transcribing them, and subjoining another stanza, borrowed from two different authors, to give it the air of a sonnet.

Yes, I remember, and with pride repeat

The rapid progress which our friendship knew!
Even at the first with willing minds we met,

And ere the root was fixt the branches grew,
In vain had Fortune placed her weak barrier,
Clear was thy breast from pride, and mine from
servile fear.

I saw thee generous, and with joy can say,

My education rose above my birth;
Thanks to those parent shades, on whose cold clay
Fall fast my tears, and lightly lie the earth!
To them I owe what'er I dare pretend,
Thou saw'st with partial eye, and bade me call
thee friend.

And now, while cheer'd by thy superior praise,

I bless the silent path the fates decree,
And from the list of my inglorious days
Gladly erase the moments crown'd by thee —
O let this boast to future times descend,
Thou wert indeed my guide, my counsellor, my
friend!

The transcription of these verses
brought on a poetical appetite, which

I gratified immediately by perusing some certain pieces that I hardly durst venture to speak of, lest I should incur an imputation that my soul disdains. You never shall accuse me *justly* of flattery; yet *I must* say, in the language of Plato to Fennelon, „When one reads your compositions, one thinks that one hears Apollo's lyre, strung by the hands of the Graces, and tuned by the Muses,“

or rather by Apollo himself.

To * *

All praise is foreign, but of true desert,
Plays round the head, but reaches not the heart.
Ah! why recall the toys of thoughtless youth;
When flowery fiction held the place of truth?
When fancy rul'd! when trill'd each trivial strain.
But idly sweet, and elegantly vain.

O! in that strain, if all of wit had flow'd,
 All music warbled, and all beauty glow'd;
 Had liveliest nature, happiest art combin'd,
 That lent each grace, and this each grace refin'd;
 Alas! how little were my proudest boast!
 The sweetest trifter of my tribe at most,

To sway the judgment while he charms the ear;
 To curb mad passion in its wild career;
 To blend with skill, as loftiest themes require;
 All reason's rigour and all fancy's fire,
 Be this the poet's praise. — With this uncrown'd,
 Wit dies a jest, and poetry a sound.

In Mason's Monody on the death of
 Pope you may read this poetical answer
 to your poetical epistle, Adieu,

To *.

Your poetical reproof, for I can hardly
 call it a letter, has rather disconcerted me,

and made me doubt whether I may pursue my intention, which was to transcribe any little occasional piece of poetry that should seem applicable to my proposed subject. I ever loved to clothe my own thoughts in other people's language; but this is an unnecessary remark; for I am sure you must often smile at my frequent quotations, and compare them to *Sancho's* proverbs. They are at least as *ready*, and perhaps equally well chosen.

The intended subject of to-day was a copy of verses addressed to my Lord Chesterfield, which I found in the Magazine, and suppose to be lately written. There is a vein of delicacy runs through it that softens the hyperbole — in short, I must transcribe it, and pray do not throw it into the fire without reading, but rather (leaving out the allusion to

Lord C.'s misfortune) consider it as addressed to yourself by

Your most obliged and obedient.

To the Earl of Chesterfield.

Reclin'd beneath thy shade, *Blackheath!*
 From politics and strife apart,
 His temples crown'd with laurel wreath,
 And virtue smiling at his heart;
 Will *Chesterfield* the muse allow
 To break upon his still retreat?
 To view, if health still smooths his brow,
 And prints his grove with willing feet;
 Though gratitude be rarely found
 In courts or spacious drawing-room,
 Still shall she tread Poetic ground,
 And favours past shall ne'er intomb,
 'Twas this awoke the present theme,
 (And bade it reach thy distant ear)
 Where, if no ray of genius beam
 Sincerity at least is there.
 May pale disease fly far aloof
 O'er vernal domes its flag display,

And health beneath thy peaceful roof.

Add lustre to thine evening ray!

If this my fervent wish be crown'd,

I'll deck with flow'rs the godhead's shrine;—

Nor thou, with wisdom's chaplet bound,

At any absent gift repine.

What tho' thou dost not grace a throne

Where subjects bend the supple knee,

No other king the muses own,

And science lifts her eye to thee.

Tho' deafness, by a doom severe,

Steals from thy ear the murm'ring rill,

Or Philomel's delightful air,

You deem not *this* a partial ill.

Ah! if anew thine ear was strung,

Awake to ev'ry voice around,

Thy praises by the many sung

Would stun thee with the choral sound! —

To * * ,

I am not very well this morning; I
was taken with a shivering yesterday, and

had a feverish, bad night, but am in hopes it will wear off again. Doctor * at least *bids* me hope so, and tells me there is no doubt of it.

I thank you for your verses ; for tho' I had seen them long ago, I was pleased with the re-perusal. I was pleased too with the fairness and elegance of the transcript. I admire your *Italiano*.

— — — 'Tis a fair hand:

And whiter than the paper it wrote on
Is the fair hand that writ, — — —

These verses reminded me of your *extempore*. It is really very unkind to deny me so often another sight of it. You don't know how soothing these things are at a certain time of life; neither is there any fear that *poetry*, if tolerable, will ever meet an unwelcome reception. The humours of mankind are so different at different times, that one

must not judge them by a single event: besides, the poetical reproof, as you call it, was only sent as a quotation that ap-
 positely answered *your* quotation; nor does it intimate the prohibition of rhyme, it only restrains the praise of it. I would have all praise confined to meritorious actions. *Virtue* would tire before she got to her journey's end, if *Vanity* did not give her a lift now and then; but the more trivial accomplishments should be sparingly commended.

For this reason, and because I hate to say the same things incessantly, I often forbear paying the *due* tribute of civility to my fair correspondent. My letters would be a mere string of panegyric, were I to express the justice my heart does to your good qualities, or even to the common productions of your ingenious *pen*.

And really I was guilty of *ingratitude* as well as neglect, when I forebore acknowledging your very polite application of Mr. Whitehead's verses, in the management of which, and the connexion of the other lines, there is more ingenuity and merit, than in many original poems. I should be ashamed to tell you *how much* I was pleased with that generous compliment. Abundance of the fine things which poor mortals bestow upon one another by way of *praise*, are received with coldness and inattention; but what bosom is proof against the delicate insinuations of kindness and *esteem*? In short, no compliment can be acceptable to a person of *merit*, though it should raise a blush on the cheek, unless it produce at the same time *a glow in the heart*.

To amuse myself *and you*, I think I will transcribe a few lines, very much

in the style of those to Lord Chesterfield: they were written before you were born, and appeared first in the Magazines of those days. As you *did not* know the author, I may say the thought is not inelegantly turned. *Ecoutez,*

TO A L A D Y.

Written on the Banks of a River near
her Father's Villa.

While these close walls her beauties hide,
For whose dear sake forlorn I rove;
On the clear stream's opposing side
The Muse shall wail my hapless love,
My love! — which nothing can outvie,
Which never shall a period know;
Ye breezes tell her as ye fly,
The waters bear it as ye flow. —
And tho' (by adverse friends confin'd)
My yielding fair I vainly crave
O bring her murmurs, gentle wind,
Her image, ev'ry passing wave!

Ah no !— Ye winds her sighs conceal,
 Nor you, ye waves, reflect her face,
 Lest Æolus my passion feel,
 And Neptune sue for her embrace.
 Small need ye should her accents bear,
 Or to my view her form impart,
 Whose voice dwells ever on my ear,
 Whose image ever in my heart.

Adieu for the present; I am obliged
 to break off, but will add a few lines
 anon.

You will be sorry to hear that I left
 off through indisposition. My disorder
 is increased. It is with difficulty that I
 write — but this will be in time three
 hours hence; so I can send you a later
 account.

I was not able to resume in time for
 the Diligence; so Dispatch shall carry
 you this, and satisfy all your enquiries.

I *really* am extremely ill; and fancy myself worse for not having yet why repine Many there are with *equal* propensities to domestic tenderness who are denied the sweets of it. Perhaps the exalted share I once partook . . . but away with these useless complainings yet 'tis natural at the instant of suffering to wish relief.

My present wish is for the society of a kindred mind. Why should I not say for *your* society, my amiable friend? for *your* soothing conversation. You are capable of generous sympathy . . . You would suffer my drooping head to repose on your gentle bosom You would shed the tear of compassion on my pale cheek and above all, you would desire, in the words of your admirable motto, which I have been contempla-

ting this half hour, I say, you would desire with *sincerity* that I should

„Live a little longer.“

Adieu. Pardon this weakness . . . I will conquer it Adieu.

To *.

What can I say to your letter? — O my friend! And are you really so much indisposed! — I am distracted with grief and apprehension — perhaps you are worse by this time — yet God forbid! Write instantly, I conjure you — on my knees I conjure you to write instantly: and if you wish for my company — but, alas! what service can I render? — yet say the word — shall I come? — If you desire it I will come — regardless of fame, regardless of censure — happy, too happy if my care, my assiduity, my unwearied and affectionate

attention, can procure you one moment's satisfaction. — What *can* I say? — You shall determine for me. — I cannot write. — God Almighty restore you to health; or I know not what will become of your Friend.

To * *.

I received your's more than thirty hours ago, and have waited till now for an interval of ease to answer it, being desirous of expressing myself as fully as possible.

Do not be surpris'd . . . or shocked . . . if I tell you . . . that the doctors have just left me . . . with compliments on what they were pleas'd to call the *magnanimity* of their patient.

And does it then require greatness of mind, to hear with tranquility a sen-

tence that one ought hourly to expect — or rather their prognostic of that sentence? Perhaps so — but it may be that *my* composure arises from a doubt of their presaging skill: I feel at least a firmness of *hope* that seems to contradict their opinion Yes I will tell you, (though 'tis too striking a proof of human frailty) that I still *hope* to recover.

Be that as it may, I was determined to seize the opportunity of writing, and restoring your letters. I inclose even the last, for the contents are engraven on my heart. Nor let this precaution alarm you — it is no argument of danger — I may recover; — I may write again — again I may thank you for the pleasures your friendship has afforded. — But if not — who shall dispute the decrees of Providence!

In this case, remember that (in the Bishop of Lucon's words to Madame de Ronvraie) „I make it my last request, that you will not grieve overmuch for the loss of the sincerest friend that ever had being; and yet not worthy of a friend like you.“ Preserve for my memory an affectionate, a *friendly* regard; but if ever you cherished in my favour *the very slightest degree* of a more tender sentiment, transfer it with *addition* to some deserving person, and confirm your gift at the altar. It is my serious and deliberate advice that you will not pass the prime of your life in an unconnected state. You are formed to shine in the domestic circle, to receive and impart the very essence of conjugal happiness. Commit to some worthy man the charge of your felicity. May he endeavour as sincerely to promote it as I myself would have

done, had the envied and too ardently
 wished for office been attainable. How-
 ever ill timed this declaration may be
 thought, it is no more than what every
 I cannot proceed . . . I am ex-
 tremely ill . . . Adieu.

A short interval seems afforded . . .
 I embrace it to finish this letter and re-
 move your friendly anxiety—or at least
 that uneasy *suspense* with which I am
 vain enough to think your mind is agi-
 tated. — At such a season as this, can I
 add selfishness to vanity? — can I tell
 you that I derive comfort from your
 benevolent sorrow? Yes, I *must* tell you
 that the idea (suggested by your last) of
 your unfeigned regard, is a cordial to
 my very soul!

Again I must pause through inabi-
 lity the pen drops from my hand . . .

I would by no means have you think of coming hither—nor did I expect you to make the generous offer. I complained of being debarred your company, but did not solicit you to grant it. Your fame is, and was ever, as dear to me as your friendship; and when I consider the true nature and extreme delicate texture of female honour, I regret not the sacrifices I have made to it, nor even that I let your opinion prevail against the *bequest*.

Adieu. I cannot persuade myself that this is the last time of addressing you; but lest it should . . . I send you my best wishes God Almighty protect, sustain, preserve, and bless you . . . here and for ever!

Adieu, my tender, my sincere friend.
—Dearest and most amiable of women
—Adieu.

To the same.

I live. — I am recovering — and the second effort of my pen is to acquaint you with it. The first was dedicated to that power which bestowed the ability; and the *enclosed* contains my sentiments on the occasion. You must however return it uncopied. — No eye but your's and the all-Seeing shall ever behold it. Be pleased also to use caution in giving your opinion of this hasty production. Faults it doubtless may have; but not such as will warrant criticism. You now perhaps think I resemble the archbishop in *Gil Blas*; and that my indisposition having weakened the mental powers, I am no more capable of judging than of writing — but I only intended to observe, that an effusion of gratitude

or transport should not be tried by the rules of colder compositions. On the other hand, you must by no means *commend* it; for whatever degree of merit it possesses, is in reality detracted from *my* character. Every ardent expression conveys a secret reproof; and the general tenor of it is a reproach to a man who has at times affected to be weary of the gift which it celebrates, and ought rather to have been prepared to *resign* it with equal cheerfulness.

Yet who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,

This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful clay,

Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind.

I am now impatient to receive the congratulations that your gentle and friendly heart will dictate upon this occasion. Dispatch, who travels all night, will call again for your answer. From

him too you may learn more particularly the circumstances of my amendment. I am still very faint and languid, but while returning health smiles within my view, I can easily support so trivial an inconvenience.

Adieu. I rejoice to subscribe myself yet once again your friend. — your sincere and very affectionate friend.

Is not this a very good opportunity to solicit a copy of the *extempore* verses that I have so often requested in vain? Surely you will not know how to refuse me just now. I shall expect to see them inclosed with the Ode.

To *

You are impatient to receive the congratulations that my heart will dictate on this occasion, and most probably expect

more from me than you will receive, for the language of *my heart* is not expressible, nor could any degree of eloquence convey an idea of its joy. I bless and adore the goodness of that *Being* whose favour has restored you to health; and beseech him to keep you for ever in his holy protection — but, why should I attempt to tell *you* how sincerely I rejoice; — how fervently I wish you long life and happiness? The warmest professions are no more than empty sounds, and might be used by the most indifferent person.

If wishing well had but a body in it,
That might be felt, then, we the poorer born,
Whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes
Might with effects of them follow our friends.

But as it is, I will only desire you to delineate in your fancy the sincerest and most ardent effusion of tenderness

and friendship, and believe that it springs from my heart.

I return you the Ode with a thousand acknowledgments, and *uncopied* too, but in „the volume of my brain.“ I dare not give my opinion — you would accuse me of flattery — neither could any panegyric — but I will not say a word about it.

Enclosed with this inimitable piece, O Heavens, what an unworthy companion! — You will find the *extempore*, which at length (though reluctantly) I submit to your perusal, because „I knew not how to refuse.“

Upon second thoughts, I will not enclose, but transcribe it, *in this place*, for I protested (if you remember) that it should never go out of my hand — but I will copy it *verbatim & literatim*.

When pleasure thrills through ev'ry vein,

And trembling nerves confess its sway

How hard to pen the measur'd strain!

But *you* command and I obey.

And *** should be my theme—

But he, alas is now too near,

Nor in his presence can I frame

A verse to please his critic ear.

My heart with gratitude oppress,

• Would fain its honest tribute pay,

But whilst I *see* my honour'd guest,

The pow'rs of language shrink away.

When Pæbus darts his noon-tide beam,

We ne'er to sing his praise aspire,

O'erpower'd by glory's fervid stream,

We pant; and drop the silent lyre.

But when he sinks behind the hill,

And paints with radiance *distant* skies,

Our freshen'd souls exert their skill,

And hymns in cheerful chorus rise.

O pardon then my languid muse,

As these unpolish'd lines you view,

And own they merit some excuse
 For being wrote to pleasure you.

I should tell you, my noble friend, that I have been much indisposed myself within this week past — a kind of feverish complaint — with loss of rest and appetite — but am now greatly amended, and going for the first time to take an airing. The chaise is at the door. — Perhaps I may fetch Mr. ** to dine with me — but I need not apologize, for my letter is sufficiently long when the subscription is added — which, if I knew how to compose it, should be as respectful — as affectionate — as joyful — but ah! — *c'est impossible* — Adieu. Adieu.

To * *.

Your gratulation, my amiable friend, fell not short of the demand [my fancy

had made on it—it exceeding that demand, and has laid me under fresh obligations.

I admire your disclaiming the help of eloquence at the instant that you practise the most refined species of it. What think you of the *break* in your concluding sentence? or even the simple repetition of the word *adieu*? 'Tis these kind of strokes that, through an understanding ear, produce the most powerful effects. Let me tell you, in the language of Shakespeare, „You do speak masterly.“ Your expressions are so touching — so tender —

They give a very echo to the fear

Where love is thron'd.— —

I peruse them every hour in the day,
and always with increasing pleasure.

O you that have a heart of such fine frame

To pay this debt of love but to a *friend*,

How would you love — if *Cupid's* potent shaft —

Would to Heaven the trial could be made!

5 o'Clock.

I left off abruptly this morning, and ought apologize for the levity of my concluding line; but you will excuse it — you cannot be displeased with a cheerfulness that springs from the return of health, and which, I hope, you will soon increase by an account of your own perfect recovery. Shall I add — — No, I will not — — I will for ever banish from my heart the suggestions of a vanity so intolerable — and I beg you never to desire an explanation of this sentence.

Let me inform you, my good friend, (for you are possibly ignorant) what is the chief merit of my letters. 'Tis their incoherency. A strange recommendation, but one that proclaims them the effu-

sion of the *moment*, which ought to be the characteristic of all familiar writing.

And pray now, let me inquire (for I have often intended it) what becomes of my letters . . . Do you preserve or destroy them? Methinks I have a curiosity to know what I have been saying to you this year and a half, but more particularly within these six months. God knows I very seldom take the pains of reading what I write to you, lest any striking tautology should induce me to *correct* or *transcribe*. — — Apropos to transcription — let me thank you a thousand times for the *extempore*. The moment I cast my eyes on it, I smiled at discovering in two particular lines (which had escaped my memory) the *absolute* reason of your unwillingness to part with it. Come now — what wager? — but this is not generous — pardon me — I accept

it very gratefully upon your own term, and will copy it myself.

I have no thoughts of coming to town at present. — My movements, in general are very uncertain. It will perhaps, be a long time ere we meet, but when we do, I shall most probably say with *jachimo*, „I'd make a journey twice as far, etc.“ — Adieu. I know not how to conclude. — Write, write *soon*, I beseech you!

To *.

Excepting two or three on particular subjects, as the counse's instruction, etc. I have no letters of your's, my Lord, but what are of this year's date. I destroyed the rest, but have preserved all these in a series, beginning with one that I wrote on New-Years Day. I have

numbered them according to the dates, and having erased every syllable that could gratify impertinent curiosity, I keep them very securely in my cabinet, and intended not to review them till after Christmas; — however they shall at any time obey your summons.

But there are certain reflections suggested by the contents of your last favour, that almost induce me to wish I had never engaged so heartily in this correspondence. Freedom, unreserve, were the proposed conditions — and I *have* wrote freely — so freely — that — in short — I don't much like to recollect *how* freely. — Not that I repent of having expressed — any thing that *is* expressed. — The refinement of delicacy, I know, is incompatible with familiar writing — Indeed our sex has very little business with familiar writing. It generally creates em-

barrassments of one kind or other — but I thought my situation and circumstance exempted — I don't know what I would say — my very style is perplexed. The meaning of it all is an apprehension of having suffered in your opinion, through a supposed want of delicacy or proper reserve.

Nevertheless I had rather (if you please) decline entering into any disquisition of the subject. It is a cause that will not bear examination; and I beg that my acquittal of this charge (if I am acquitted) may pass in silence, which I shall regard as a sufficient justification, and begin immediately upon a new score.

After the many obligations you have conferred, I cannot doubt of this being added to the number, and am, etc.

To * *.

I will spare you „the *examination*, of this cause,” and would have readily granted the whole of your request, had you not talk'd of „beginning a new score if acquitted in *silence*.”

Let us have no new scores, I beseech you. — My age is a very improper one for beginning new lessons, and a very sufficient reason for continuing the old.

„And apprehension of having suffered in your opinion through a supposed want of delicacy or proper reserve.”

Ah! my good friend, of what *texture* is this newly assumed veil, that, without disguising, attracts a closer observation. You knew *my* opinion better; but you were afraid of suffering in *your own* for certain expressions — (the truth must come out; I gave you a hint of it about

the extempore) for certain expressions of *kindness* that had dropt unawares from your pen. — „Don't much like to recollect“ — Indeed.—You are ashamed then of having expressed kindness for a benevolent old man, who regards you with paternal affection.

Are you aware of the inference that — but I spare you — because you have not suffered nor ever can „suffer in my opinion through supposed want of delicacy,“ or even „the refinement of delicacy.“

In a letter wrote during my illness, I remember disclosing my sentiments with a freedom that I thought became the occasion. Has this openness created a distance between us? It ought not. To the best of my remembrance, I told you, with great simplicity, that I preferred you, in all respects, to all women; and had destiny permitted, would have gladly *evinced* that declaration; but is this

a reason for your drawing back as it were, and withholding the marks of an esteem of which I am *not* permitted to avail myself? Why do you force me to be unpolite? Why do you oblige me to declare that I am proof against all your attractions; that I never can become your lover; and that, *therefore*, your delicacy can never be impeached, or your reserve acquitted?

What can I say more to satisfy you? From the first moment of our acquaintance, I marked you down as a subject of examination (my usual method when tempted to form a friendship) and you have not yet failed in the trial. I have studied your disposition; I have fathomed your capacity; I have tried your temper . . . I have weighed, in the balance of impartiality, your virtues and your foibles. How do the former preponderate! Let me entreat you not to throw

a scruple into the opposite scale. In a word, I have seen you at all hours, in all dresses, in all companies, and have observed a uniform, an *invariable* delicacy preside over your whole conduct.

Do these acknowledgments answer your demand? or will you still disqualify, and still solicit applause? Pardon this last expression—'tis too severe. I had forgot the influence that diffident modesty has over conscious merit; and yet I cannot conclude without telling you, in very plain language, my fixed determination.

The absurd and ridiculous customs of the world we inhabit, makes it necessary (in some degree) for us to live apart. Deprived of your conversation, I am solaced by your familiar correspondence. If you over-shadow *this* with unnecessary reserve, I will exchange it

for the other, and become, in spite of opposition, your incessant visitor, Chuse, therefore, one of these alternatives, and abide by your choice. Believe me, I had much rather be your guest than your correspondent, and when I recollect my last visit to ***, I can never forbear *wishing* to repeat it.

That visit—— You know not, my dear Mrs. **, how many circumstances, how many agreeable reflections—— The moon-light in the garden—— Do you remember it?—'Twas in crossing the little lawn near the house that we stopt short to admire the beauty of the scene, and listen, more attentively to the concealed music that vibrated along the hedges. Your hand was within my arm . . . It had felt the pressure of my lips You withdrew it Have you forgot that moment? . . . *I never shall forget it.*

Apprehensive delicacy forbid those natural, innocent, silent expressions of satisfaction; whilst Virtue, in *your* accents, directed our eyes and our thoughts to the starry heavens, and almost enabled them to penetrate the azure canopy. What an apostrophe! What sublimity! What tenderness! O had the excellent creature to whom but no more, lest I injure the subject. This was indeed one of those precious and unfrequent moments, when, by a happy concurrence of circumstances, humanity seems raised above itself, and feels sensations of which the vulgar, the ignorant, or the licentious mind cannot form an idea!

I have been reading what I have written, and am pleased with my unpremeditated digression. I hope it will not *dis*please my fair reader. Come, come, my dear friend, for so I will call you, think better of this matter. Dis-

card affectation. Return my *sincere* my *disinterested* affection with *equal* sincerity and frankness. The journey of life is, with me, drawing fast to a conclusion. *Short* indeed is the remaining passage; but rugged to the feet of a weary traveller, and barren to his decaying sight: Continue then, to beguile the irksomeness of the way, sooth him with the song of sympathy, and strew the flowers of friendship in his path.

Wednesday.

This will be a most unreasonable letter, for a fresh subject has offered, and one that I have *intended* at least twenty times to mention, and it has always escaped me: *Junius*, and his writings. Pray what is your opinion of them, particularly the last letter? I am sure his representations must interest you a little; but you should distinguish the matter from the manner, and hear both sides

of the question, before you decide on the merits of this popular writer.

I think now that this is a very *opportune* change of our subject. Let us then, if you please, drop entirely all discourse of ourselves, our situation, our sentiments, and commence politicians without loss of time. Take no notice of *the first part of this letter*, but acquaint me, as soon as possible, with all your political notions, and, in Quidnunc's language, „*What you take to be the balance of power.*“

But first you must let me know — though that is needless too: for I'll be sworn you are a *Patriot*, a true daughter of Britain; „*always for liberty*“

No love but that of Carthage fires my bosom.
 ———— for thee, O what for thee,
 My sinking country, would I not endure!

Ay, ay, she did *endure*. She deserted the fortunes of a decrepid old husband who was indifferent to her, and threw herself . . . not from the top of a pre-

cipice nor into a cauldron of boiling oil but O unparalleled sacrifice she trew herself into the arms of a handsome young man whom she loved! Poor Sophonisba! Do you not sympathize in her sufferings?

Raillery apart, I beg you will give me your free opinion of this celebrated writer and his compositions, I shall not influence your judgment by any previous remarks, nor add another line after bidding you very heartily

Farewell.

Thursday morning.

An unexpected delay obliges me to break my word; but Dispatch shall bring you this, and inform you what a droll accident has befallen the Diligence. I enclose your two last letters to be numbered and classed with the rest, and then be pleased to make them all up in a packet for him to bring me hither. I want to review, at my leisure, this lit-

the series of billet-doux, nor will you, I hope but hold — I had like to have infringed our newly established law, which is, to say nothing of ourselves at present, but as much as we please on any other topic.

I have already *given* you a topic from which I expect great entertainment. Spread your intellectual pinions, and soar at once into the region of politics, singing to *Junius*.

To *.

I wanted Dispatch to come for the packet in his return from town, as it could make but a few miles difference; but he pleads your commands to the contrary; so I shall only detain him while „*I write these few lines,*“ and adjust the other letters.

The *extorted* commendations and corrective raillery of this last favour makes

me extremely willing to observe your „newly-established law,“ and „drop all discourse of ourselves;“ though at the same time I must assure you, upon my word and honour, that my meaning was not rightly interpreted; nor did I think that the „beginning a new score“ would be understood as a deviation from our usual plan of writing; but let all that pass. I have now another task allotted me, and shall engage in it very cheerfully, if you will but hold out the proper lights, and condescend to be my political preceptor. I fancy I have not seen the last letter of Junius. Pray mention in your next whom it is addressed to. I shall for several reasons be rather impatient till I have the honour of hearing from you. I am sorry for the poor Diligence though the accident was truly ludicrous; and shall be glad to resume the more eligible conveyance.

There was no forbearing to laugh at your ridicule of poor Sophonisba's se-

cond marriage; but you take no notice of the poison that was her nuptial present, nor of her courage in drinking it. I don't mean (like the young student in *Emilius*) on account of its nauseous taste, but at all events, and mostly according to *your* representation of the affair, it required some magnanimity.

You know very well that I am jealous of my sex's honour; and there are several *other* passages in your letter, which, notwithstanding the prohibition — but 'tis no matter — Be assured only, that I abhor affectation as much as indelicacy, and am sorry for having shewn any *appearance* of it. Your reproofs are indeed *severe*, but I will profit by them, and intreat you, my honoured friend, never to spare my foibles. You shall not find me incorrigible. I do acknowledge that I was to blame (though not perhaps in the identical instance or degree that you apprehend) and now having as you very justly observe, no reason

for disguising my sentiments, I avow
them, and proclaim myself

Your obliged

and most affectionate Friend.

FINIS.

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